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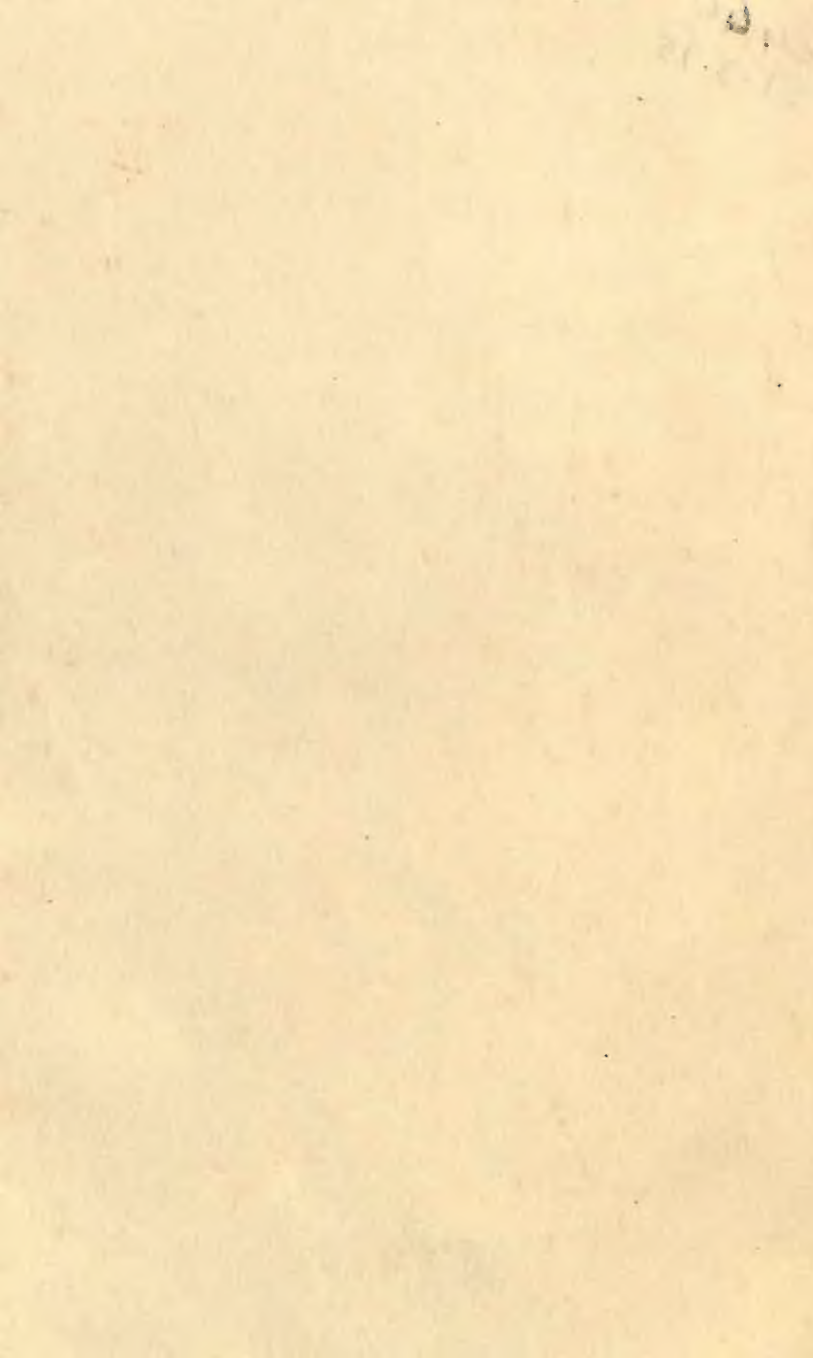
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H. R. BHATIA

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‘The burden of spelling a freakish language.’

—P. Chubb in *The Teaching of English*

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH SPELLING

H. R. BHATIA, M.A.

*Formerly of the Ministry of Education
Government of India*

THIRD EDITION



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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

THE book has been revised in the light of some recent trends in educational practice and includes reference to some experimental studies in the field of spelling. The problems of the study and teaching of English spelling in India have not been experimentally studied, and in conclusion a plea has been made that this should be done. A few topics for research have been suggested.

To enable teachers to study the problems of the teaching of spelling still further a bibliography has been added. It is hoped that Indian teachers will draw on the data made available in references for further study and reconstruct their approach to English spelling and if possible try to carry out experimental investigations into the problems of teaching English spelling to Indian pupils.

H. R. B.

Calcutta

5 December 1955

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

SOME important additions have been made to the text in the second edition. In the first place the psychological basis of the teaching of spelling has been amplified so as to bring out principles which should help in the selection, arrangement and grading of procedures to develop mastery, as well as the desire, to spell. Secondly, the factor

of self-activity in learning spelling has been emphasized in greater detail. I hope both these additions will help the teacher in reconstructing his aims and methods in the teaching of English spelling.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THIS is essentially a handbook for teachers and is the outcome of my several years' experience of teaching English both to Intermediate and High School classes in the Punjab and Rajputana.

I gratefully acknowledge the kind permission of Mr J. E. Parkinson, M.A., I.E.S., and the Oxford University Press to use my articles appearing in the *Punjab Educational Journal* and *Teaching* respectively. From Mr Parkinson I have received from time to time advice and encouragement for which it is difficult to thank him adequately. I have gleaned some useful suggestions from the examination reports of the Boards of Education of the United Provinces and Rajputana.

My grateful thanks are also due to Mr M. G. Singh, M.A. (OXON), Professor of English, Central Training College, Lahore, who not only revised the manuscript but also offered valuable suggestions which have been of real help to the book.

H. R. BHATIA

Pilani

14 September 1935

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ENGLISH SPELLING

THE spelling of modern English is curiously anomalous and inconsistent. The chief reason is that it does not correspond to the pronunciation. Often the same sound is spelt in different ways and words similar in spelling are differently pronounced. *To, two and too; their and there; seas, cease and seize; dear and deer; stationery and stationary;* are differently spelt though their pronunciation is very much the same. On the other hand, *cut and put; come and home; bound and wound; great and cheat; removed and beloved; created and defeated;* are differently pronounced though they are quite similar in spelling. Again a number of letters are superfluously added to words to whose pronunciation they do not at all contribute. Why should *night, fight, right* have *gh*? Why should *write, gate, house, college* have an *e* at the end? Why should *cry* be changed into *cries* when *play* is changed into *plays*? Such anomalies may easily be multiplied and they show conclusively enough the futility of any attempt at formulating any rules regarding English spelling. English spelling is freakish and is not amenable to any rules. It is notorious how young children in India parade such anomalies at school functions to the amusement of all present.

These discrepancies, however, are not an act of God. They have a history behind them and help to explain not only the etymology but also

some of the influences on the history and development of the English language. In the beginning there could be no other guide to spelling than the ears of those who wrote, and writing was therefore purely phonetical. But since slight individual differences were sure to creep into the pronunciation of words, spelling varied with individuals. When it stabilized in manuscript writing, the spellings of teachers and other learned people became the standard. The spoken forms of words changed from time to time but the extinct forms of speech continued to be written long after they had ceased to be heard. With the invention of the art of printing the old spelling was all the more firmly established irrespective of changes in pronunciation. Thus the present English spelling represents the pronunciation current at that time or even earlier. Again, early English scholars found their vernacular an extremely insufficient medium in which to convey the great thoughts of the classics and constantly and copiously borrowed Latin and French words to enrich the English vernacular. Such borrowings brought in peculiarities of Latin and French spelling, not only in writing words borrowed from these languages but also in writing originally English words. Lastly the English alphabet is far from being perfect as a means of rendering sound; it possesses just five vowels, and many of the discrepancies between pronunciation and spelling may be attributed to these imperfections. For example *ch* stands for two sounds as in *benches* and *machine*, *o* in *goal* and *gaol*, *u* in *put* and *cut*, *a* in *cat* and *walk*.

These discrepancies between spelling and sound, whatever their explanation, make the lot of the beginner very hard indeed. The Indian student is at a greater disadvantage. Almost all his vernaculars are phonetic. He spells what he pronounces, he puts down a letter or letters for every articulated sound and for no other, and carrying this habit into the spelling of English words he plays havoc with them. Even when he comes to realize the strange and irregular character of English spelling, in the absence of any definite rules he shelters himself under rough analogies, ever vague and unreliable, and makes confusion worse confounded. A number of high school pupils are found spelling 'coming' as 'com-ming'; 'two' as 'tow'; 'there' as 'their', and so on.

II

THE IMPORTANCE OF CORRECT SPELLING

THE value and importance of correct spelling is often discounted. Mark Twain and Shakespeare made fun of those who could spell correctly, and many lesser people to this day dismiss the ability to spell correctly as a mere language skill, the least important of the mechanical phases of written expression which does not necessarily interfere with the understanding of thought or the flow of ideas. If this is so, there seems to be no excuse for the uneconomical waste of time and red ink that teachers of English expend

on it. The need of correct spelling arises in written expression and there all that matters, it is argued, is the matter and style of composition. Errors of grammar, sentence construction and punctuation can make a difference to thought and understanding but not errors in spelling. This is clearly a mistake. Bad spelling can distort meaning and cause great mental confusion even though grammar and sentence construction are correct. Here are a few examples of such confusion:

‘He went from bed (bad) to wars (worse).’

‘He arranged his shoes (shows) in the opposite manner (manor).’

To be able to spell one’s words correctly may not be a great achievement but to spell them wrongly is certainly reprehensible. However bright the ideas or happy the expression, a composition will lack elegance if the words used are not correctly spelt. Besides, to spell one’s words correctly is a part of the courtesy due to the person who is to read what is written, and the absence of it is considered lack of good education and respectability. Today one of the frequent criticisms made of our high school pass youth is that ‘He can’t even spell’, implying that he lacks even the minimum of literacy we expect from one who has been to school. It may be because errors in spelling can be much more easily recognized than errors in grammar and syntax but so long as correct spelling is considered the mark of an educated person, the time and attention given to the teaching and learning of English spelling is fully justified.

'English spelling', says H. G. Wyatt (*The Teaching of English in India*¹), 'is a conventional nuisance, but so long as the convention remains of reckoning conformance to standard a mark of the educated adult, teachers who respect this convention must take the trouble to secure conformance in their pupils.' So there seems to be no justification for errors in spelling. The spelling in English of an ordinary pupil in India as he leaves the high school is bad, and that of the one who joins is much worse, and therefore of all persons a teacher should be the last to exonerate pupils from bad spelling. Finally, lack of accuracy in one thing leads to lack of accuracy in others and people who spell carelessly are prone to be careless in everything else.

III

CAN SPELLING BE TAUGHT?

BUT should spelling be taught? Or can spelling be taught? Modern educational practice based on some of the recent experimental investigations of the problem is in favour of tabooing all spelling teaching. 'Spelling is "caught" rather than "taught"', says W. S. Tomkinson in *The Teaching of English*.²

The researches of J. M. Rice into the pedagogy of spelling led him to conclude that all the time devoted to the teaching of spelling beyond a certain maximum of fifteen minutes a day is a sheer

¹ Oxford University Press, 3rd edition.

² Clarendon Press.

waste of time and effort. He examined a large number of children drawn from different strata of society and taught by different methods, and through test words given alone, in sentences and in composition written on a story basis, found that the best spellers were, as a rule, to be found among the brightest pupils, that the ability to spell in a given grade was not determined by age and that the influence of methods of teaching was nil. His conclusion in his own words was as follows: 'In fact there is no direct relation between methods and results. . . . The results varied as much under the same as they did under different methods of instruction. The facts here presented, in my opinion, will admit of only one conclusion, viz., that the results are not determined by the methods employed, but by the ability of those who use them. In other words, the first place must be given to the personal equation of the teacher, while methods and devices play a subordinate part.'

Such results, somewhat startling as they were, led to extensive experimental investigations by Dr Cornman on the teaching of spelling proper. His main experiment was to delete entirely specific drill in spelling, the spelling book, and home lessons in the subject, from the programme of two schools for a period of three years and to see what effect it had on the spelling of pupils. At the end of the three years of experimentation, it was found that, according to all the standards of measurement that were used,

(1) The pupils spelled about as well one year as another in spite of the omission of a

daily spelling period and lessons for home study.

(2) In spite of the omission of specific instruction in spelling, the pupils showed steady improvement. They neither gained nor lost appreciably by the absence of spelling lessons and drill from the school programme. The work of the two schools in spelling was nearly as good as in previous years when special drill in spelling had been the rule of every class and quite as good as that of other schools in the same city that retained the spelling drill.

(3) The amount of time spent in specific spelling teaching bears no discoverable relation to the results attained.

(4) The degree of mental development is the most important factor in accuracy in spelling.

He concludes, 'It is, therefore, advisable in view of the economy of time to rely upon incidental teaching of spelling to produce a sufficiently high average result. . . . The spelling drill, as at present administered throughout the country, adds little or nothing to the effectiveness of the mere incidental teaching of spelling. It may be reasonably assumed, therefore, that even if the spelling drill were brought to the highest degree of perfection it could not produce noticeably greater spelling percentages than those given as the results of the several composition tests.'¹

But the reliability of Dr Cornman's experiment has been questioned by those who advocate the

¹ Quoted by E. L. Thorndike in *Educational Psychology*.

direct method of teaching spelling. All the factors in his study may not have been controlled and it may not be strictly objective at every point as he seems to assume. But on the other hand it must be conceded that his conclusions cannot be altogether rejected. Generally speaking it is practically impossible to make studies in education strictly scientific, and at best Dr Cornman may be accused of having overstated his case against the traditional formal or direct method of teaching spelling as a distinct and separate subject, which is allotted a definite period in the time-table of the day and in which long lists of words are prescribed for every pupil to learn by rote. Dr Cornman prefers that spelling should be left to incidental teaching.

Wallins followed a different technique. He gave pupils systematic drill on a list of words and later tested them on spelling through dictated composition containing those words. Thus he claimed to discover 'the extent of transfer from formal spelling to composition'. He took all steps to make the study 'legitimate and adequate' by

(1) Dictating to the children compositions, 'relevant to their stage of development and interests, containing among other words a given number of *test* words which have at some previous time been subjected to a thoroughgoing treatment in columns.'

(2) Considering only the drill or test words in correcting the papers.

'Compliance with these conditions,' he claimed, 'will strip the problem of irrelevant complications, and eliminate all factors save the factor under

investigation, which scientific procedure demands shall be kept under controlled conditions.' (*Spelling Efficiency in Relation to Age, Grade and Sex, and the Question of Transfer*, pages 24-5.)

But the study of Wallins suffers from two weaknesses. In the first place though he claims 'scientific' status for his study he failed to isolate the incidental learning of spelling which is continuous and widespread particularly in a progressive school where he made his study. Secondly his study reveals only what percentage of words given in the list of words on which they had been recently drilled are spelled correctly in a dictated composition, not in free composition and self-expression. What percentage of these words they were able to use in their own writing later, say a letter, is not revealed by the study of Wallins. In fact words which are not used in one's own writing, which after all is the most crucial test of words having been completely mastered, are sure to be forgotten sooner or later and all the labour and attention spent on them is utterly wasted. This fact is accepted even by those who are staunch supporters of the drill method of the old type.

It must have become clear by now that there are two opposing camps on the question of teaching spelling. One is the method of drill or repetition. Words whose spelling is to be mastered are spelled again and again orally or in writing till they are completely mastered. This method is formal and direct. Spelling is a separate and distinct subject in the daily time-table of the school, and it is taught and studied as a subject in itself and of itself. There are definite

lists of words prescribed for each class, there is a detailed method of teaching and testing and marks are allotted to spelling in progress reports. The second is the incidental, informal and indirect. It is the method of experience and usage. Young pupils learn to spell words as they use them in daily school activities involving reading and writing. Work in connexion with reading, reciting, composition, translation, history and the like offers rich opportunities for handling a large variety of words, pupils learn the spelling of what words they are likely to need in their own writing. There are no ready-made lists, there is no mechanical cramming. The pupil's needs and interests, his meaningful experience and purpose provide him with a large number of words and help him to learn their spelling. A wise teacher does not let this happen by chance but unobtrusively directs children to concentrate on words they need.

The older methods of teaching English in India combined reading with spelling and hence the need of specific teaching in spelling never arose. English was taught by the alphabet method, pupils spelling out each letter in the new word. The ABC method began with those words in which pronunciation corresponded with spelling and words were selected for spelling and sound similarities. R-A-T, C-A-T, M-A-T, B-A-T and H-A-T were taught together, and the common sound and spelling element did not necessitate separate lessons in spelling. The teacher expected that his class would acquire spelling as they acquired the meaning and pronunciation of words and to a great extent his expectations were ful-

filled. But the alphabet method no longer holds the field. It is being increasingly replaced by the word method, in which children learn words from the very beginning and reading does not necessitate breaking up words into their component letters. So spelling must be provided apart from instruction in reading. Nor is spelling given the primary position which it formerly had. Reading is given the place of importance, and spelling is taught only after some skill in reading has been acquired. Though spelling has been given a secondary position it is its due position, and the need of its specific teaching along more rational lines is being increasingly recognized.

IV

CHANGING IDEALS AND METHODS

THE last fifty years have witnessed a complete and wholesale revision and reconstruction of our attitudes, methods and objectives in education. The needs of the child are considered more important than the subject-matter, learning is no longer committing things to memory, education is an active, complex process and the child is an organism that grows by reacting and adjusting to concrete situations. The teacher is not merely to impart knowledge but to encourage young people to take part in various activities and learn by doing things in a suitable social environment. The phenomenal growth of psychology and biology influenced education in several ways and

the traditional formal methods gave way to progressive and dynamic methods in which the needs and interests of children were the sole determining factor of what should be taught and how it should be taught. A spirit of critical inquiry is abroad and there is a growing willingness to test accepted thoughts and practices against the evidence of carefully analysed facts. Curricula and studies in primary and high schools are being reviewed in terms of their importance to children and of their need in social life. Those subjects which are not directly related to the needs of children and actual life are being weeded out. Those topics and subjects which retained their places in the curricula merely for the purpose of training mental faculties are being dropped. Thus spelling as a method of training memory gets the go-by. The formal mechanical method of making pupils learn by heart lists of words selected by the teacher or of standing in a row and spelling orally the words pronounced by the teacher, or the more strenuous, if not the more monstrous, method of asking them to shout in a simultaneous sing-song the spelling of a word after the teacher, has fallen into disrepute. Such forms of drill lack motive, and therefore interest, and what lacks interest cannot be successfully learned.

V

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SPELLING

THE earlier psychology of spelling was also wrong. It looked upon spelling as a method of training memory and was responsible for the absurd educational practice of asking pupils to learn in parrot-fashion lists of isolated words from a spelling book. Recent investigations of psychology show that memory has not much to do with spelling and that what matters most is the innate capacity to concentrate on details. It has been shown experimentally that a pupil after careful memorizing may be able to write isolated words in a list accurately and readily, but he may not be able to spell words accurately or readily when they occur in sentences either dictated or composed by himself. Its reason is not far to seek. Spelling habits, like all other habits, are very specific. When the spelling of a word is learnt in a certain situation, it can be reproduced accurately and readily only in that situation. If the situation is slightly altered, the pupil will not be able to spell the words so accurately or so readily, even if he can spell them at all. Hence it is evident that the spelling grind, in vogue under the régime of the older psychology, was absolutely futile, and that the learning of spelling should be very closely associated with, and must of necessity be done in, situations demanding correct spelling. Since such a need arises only in writing, it is mainly in writing that the pupil should form habits of correct spelling.

Spelling is a sensory-motor habit acquired by repeated motor responses to certain sensory stimuli. The sensory stimulus is generally a written or printed word in reading. The eye must be trained to see the word as a whole and in its component elements. Or it may be the word spoken, and the ear must *be trained to hear the component sounds one by one*, to catch the word as a whole and the order of sounds in uttering the letters and syllables. Often the word may have to be articulated in whispers, just as sometimes we cannot spell a word orally but have to seize a pen to write the word out and thus make out the spelling. With these visual and auditory images the muscles of the hand and the fingers must have formed very definite and ready associations of movements. Thus spelling involves sight, hearing, the muscular movements of the arm, the hand and the fingers, the muscular movements of the vocal chords, the tactile sensations in the hands, joints and vocal chords, and all these must be perfectly harmonized and co-ordinated before the spelling of any word can be said to have been mastered. In the finished habit of correct spelling the mere pronunciation, sight, image or idea of the word automatically brings about the successive links involved in writing the letters in correct order or naming the several component letters, and economy in learning to spell consists largely in providing conditions under which associations between the several links of sensory and motor reactions may be established most easily and readily, and most firmly for the words whose spelling the pupils should learn.

Moreover, modern applications of psychology to educational practice have revealed that the traditional method of making pupils learn to spell from ten to fifteen thousand words was irrational. On an average a pupil who passes the high school examination does not need in his school work and will not need in later life to spell more than three thousand words. This applies to vocabulary in the mother-tongue. Perhaps the working vocabulary in English of an Indian student is much smaller. Of course in later life he may have to master a special and technical vocabulary connected with the trade he pursues, but so long as he is in school there is no reason why he should be unnecessarily overburdened with the spelling of words he is not likely to use.

VI

THE PROBLEM

THE aim of all spelling instruction should be to make the spelling of familiar words largely automatic. A pupil should be able to spell his words correctly without interfering with the trend of his thought either in writing or reading. Correct spelling should become so habitual as to require no attention. He who spells his words correctly after an effort at a clear reproduction of the form of the word and is unable to follow the line of thought in doing so, has yet to learn spelling. All good spelling must be judged by the fact that the pupil can write his words

correctly and automatically while he is completely absorbed in the thought he is expressing.

Another aim of the teaching of spelling is to impress upon the pupil the great necessity and importance of spelling his words correctly. Not only should he develop a 'spelling sense' so that a faulty spelling 'looks wrong' but he should also gladly take the trouble of consulting a dictionary, or making inquiries from the teacher rather than put down incorrect spelling.

Spelling being a matter of habit is subject to all the laws of habit-formation. Its problem is twofold:

Firstly, to inculcate among young pupils habits of correct spelling.

Secondly, to devise ways and means by which habits of bad spelling may be replaced by correct ones.

VII

THE OBJECTIVES

WITH so general a statement of the problem it seems necessary to proceed more analytically and work out in detail what specific objectives should be aimed at in an organized plan of class work. It is difficult to grade them but every teacher must keep them in view whatever the age and ability of his pupils.

In the first place, pupils must be taught to recognize words. Familiarity through varied experience with words in reading, writing and conversation will help recognition, but only a

few words should be introduced at a time. With primary classes readers employing selected and limited vocabularies should be preferred. New words should invariably be written on the black-board and pupils should be asked to copy them in their notebooks.

Secondly, pupils should be able to pronounce words. The teacher should read aloud to the class almost every day and also listen with interest to pupils reading. In teaching new words pronunciation should be emphasized.

Thirdly, the use of newly taught words in their own written expression should be encouraged.

Fourthly, the pupils should be made to realize very early the need and value of correct spelling. They should develop the habit of noticing the sequence of letters in every new word, and of frequently using the dictionary, both for knowing and verifying the spelling of words. Once their interest in correct spelling is aroused, they will develop a spelling conscience, a feeling that words should be correctly spelt.

VIII

PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE TEACHING OF SPELLING

THERE are certain psychological principles underlying the teaching and learning of spelling which every teacher must take note of, for they will help him in the selection, arrangement and grading of procedures to develop mastery as well as the desire to spell.

In the first place he must recognize individual differences among pupils. The rate at which various children learn to spell depends on the individual child and the method. Some children are auditory spellers, they learn most readily what they hear. They are more conscious of the sound elements of words than of the letters which compose them. For them oral spelling is the best means of improvement and the teacher must emphasize the sound of the word and letters. Those who belong to this group have difficulty with English spelling because English is not a phonetic language. In many English words there are relics of old forms, some letters being without any value in word pronunciation. Some children learn most readily that which they see. For them the printed word or the practice of black-board writing is the best help. Some children learn most readily through movement. For them writing out each letter of the word helps to fix in their minds the sequence of letters and syllables. Since children in a class vary in interest and ability, the teacher will do well to employ all these methods. Besides, children in a class differ in ability to grasp and remember, in their past experiences and present vocabulary needs. It is only by thus capitalizing their differences that a teacher can increase the efficiency of class work by making it possible to adjust the subject-matter and the method to fit the needs and interest of each pupil. One very effective way of providing for individual differences is to avoid expecting all children of a class to study the same list of words, and to guide each child to

evolve his own list of spelling words. Such words would have a relevance and importance which teacher-made lists will lack and the child will develop the healthy habit of learning to spell words as he needs them.

Words to be spelled must be presented very vividly. Other things being equal children retain longest those impressions which have been introduced with vividness. Whether the teacher is giving the spelling of a word orally, through sight or through movement in writing, the presentation should be very vivid. Pronunciation and enunciation should be clear and sufficiently loud and emphatic. Blackboard writing should be bold and transcription should be very legible. Persistent practice with vivid impression will go a long way in fixing correct spelling.

The meaning of a word should be thoroughly explained before a pupil is expected to learn to spell it. Such an explanation makes associations in his mind richer and more concrete, and words, instead of being arbitrary jumbles of letters, become living meaningful tools, needed in workaday written expression. Interest is the fly-wheel of successful learning and it can be aroused if children understand the need of spelling words correctly. The demands of written expression will press home on them this need and when they understand the use and meaning of words, the ability to spell them aright will give them satisfaction and joy and strengthen their desire for further learning.

There are a number of pupils who get promoted to a higher class, when their spelling is

not up to the standard of the new class. The need for individual guidance and remedial work, such as is proposed in spelling games and drill hereinafter, becomes necessary.

IX

SPELLING AND SELF-ACTIVITY

LEARNING in spelling should be conceived as growth in power and control over the tools of written expression, and pupils should be led to look upon tests as an opportunity to appraise that power. As they become conscious of their increasing control over spelling and begin to take pride in it, they will desire to increase that control and add more words to their vocabularies. From this point of view successful teaching of spelling should aim, not at achievement and acquisition, but at growth and the desire for further growth, which are all important. Once pupils are encouraged and stimulated in the course of their experience with written expression to work for the development of their power in spelling, they will not pass by, without complete mastery, any word which they need in written expression, and which they must undertake to learn to spell. Here as elsewhere self-help is the best form of help, and the successful teacher will lead pupils, step by step, to accept full responsibility for their work, selecting the words to be studied, and testing themselves to make absolutely sure that they have succeeded in mastering words selected.

Let the new teaching in spelling be shot through and through with purpose and interest, with intense self-activity on the part of pupils. They should be taught to see their own spelling problems, to purpose and plan to solve those problems, to co-operate with others in solving those problems, and finally to appraise the success of their own efforts. To this end the teacher's responsibility will be threefold:

In the first place, he should present spelling situations to the pupils in such a way, that they themselves will form purposes in those situations which seem worthwhile to them, and make them self-active. The degree to which the pupils' interest is aroused and the extent to which they become self-active is a measure of the teacher's success in the teaching of spelling.

Secondly, when pupils have become conscious of definite objectives in the learning of spelling, the teacher should help them to realize those objectives. This means that pupils should be helped to plan their work, to visualize their difficulties and make an effort to overcome them. This help should be just help, and not domination, which every self-active person will resent and rebel against. The choice must always be with them.

Thirdly, the teacher should never miss interpreting the positive results of pupils' efforts, and the benefits they have secured. A consciousness that honest labour seldom goes in vain and that previous effort has yielded satisfactory results is a great encouragement to many boys and girls.

S.C.E.R.T., West Bengal

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X

THE CHOICE OF WORDS

ORDINARILY a teacher of English in India expects that his class should be able to spell correctly each and every word that occurs in his reader or text. This practice is only a slight modification of the old system of expecting pupils to commit to memory ten to fifteen thousand words irrespective of the fact that most of them were never to be used either in their oral or written expression. This system involves a great deal of waste, as has already been shown.

Every pupil has three vocabularies. The first is his speech vocabulary, that is words used in everyday intercourse with his companions, at home, in the school or the playground. The speech vocabulary in English of an average Indian pupil is very meagre, mostly because he never has opportunities, and is rarely called upon, to talk in English for his daily intercourse. The second is his writing vocabulary, that is the number of words he uses to express himself in black and white. This is larger than the first, partly because he has more time to think and choose his words, and is not obliged to take the first word that comes into his mind. The third is his reading vocabulary, that is, the number of words he is acquainted with and can understand, though many of them he is not likely to use either in writing or in speech. This reading vocabulary is much larger than either his speech vocabulary or writing vocabulary.

Now it is the writing vocabulary from which spelling words should be selected, partly because it is the only vocabulary which is really his own and which is at his beck and call whenever he sits down to write, and partly because the need of correct spelling arises only in written expression.

Much of the waste in the teaching of spelling would be eliminated if this consideration were borne in mind. Spelling is the stumbling-block of many a teacher of English in this country. He frets at the freakishness of English spelling and the thick-headedness of his pupils to grasp it. But much of the fault lies with him. He does not properly select his words and expects his class to spell correctly every random word that is found in the textbooks. His words come from the reading vocabulary of the class and not from their writing vocabulary. Pupils should be taught and expected to spell correctly words they use in their written work. Spelling is mostly a matter for the eye. It is necessary because we are called upon to write and it is the mistakes made in actual writing that should determine what words should be selected for spelling teaching.

XI

WHERE TO FIND SUCH WORDS

THE best place to find such words as any pupil should be expected to spell correctly is in his writing exercise book. His writing vocabulary is revealed in his compositions, dictations, pieces of translation, reproduction or paraphrase. By far the most fruitful source is his answer-book

written in the examination hall, where he is hard pressed for time and freely uses the vocabulary that is at his command. The teacher who wishes to improve the spelling of his class should be frequently looking into the exercise books of his class and gathering the individual difficulties of his pupils.

A number of spelling books giving lists of words a pupil of any age should be expected to spell correctly are commonly put on the market but they seem to presume that the spelling difficulties of children are the same all the world over and that any individual teacher does not know his pupils and their difficulties. Such lists are not only unnecessary but they prevent the teacher from understanding the actual pitfalls of his pupils. It is much better if the teacher forms his own list for each class on the basis of his experience of corrections in the written work of his pupils. When a new class is formed it should be given a few tests in spelling to ascertain what standard it has so far achieved and then the later teaching should be graded according to the results of such tests. The preliminary tests will enable the teacher to tabulate the number of times each word has been misspelt and the common type of error in the misspelt form of each word. On their basis he should make up two lists, one of words misspelt by a considerable number of pupils and the other of words misspelt only by some of them. These lists will be of great use to the teacher. In the first place he will come to know what words the class can easily spell and he therefore need not waste any

time on them. Secondly, he will discover what are the words which most boys cannot spell and what is the peculiar character of their errors in spelling. Thirdly, he will come to know the individual attainment in spelling. This is very important, since most of the errors in spelling are confined to individual pupils and need individual correction and attention.

XII

TRANSCRIPTION

THE need of correct spelling arises only in writing and it is mainly in writing that the pupil should form habits of correct spelling. Spelling is a motor habit and he should be encouraged to have considerable practice in writing correct spellings of words through direct imitation from the blackboard or the reader till the habit is formed. Transcription in the early years of the school deserves much more attention than it is given, considering that even high school students betray habits of negligence in transcribing words from the blackboard; and an intelligent teacher under the pretext of calligraphy will make his pupils automatically learn to spell correctly many new words. Care, however, should be taken that too great a variety of words is not introduced. A child will acquire a sufficiently large vocabulary in two years even if he learns only one word a day.

In dealing with junior pupils who have just mastered the alphabet it would be better to adopt what may be called the Look, Say and Write method. The problem is to enable the pupil to

copy, in detail, such a pattern as a seen word with its constituent letters in the proper order. Words should be written very legibly on the blackboard and their meaning should be explained or illustrated. The pupils should be asked to pronounce them, to fix them in their minds and then to transcribe them in their exercise books. With beginners only one word should be taken at a time. Suppose we take the word *Rose*. Let it be presented visually by writing it on the blackboard. Then either the object itself or a picture of it is shown to the pupils to make the symbolic impression more concrete and living. Then the word is spoken and the pupils also are called upon to pronounce it. After they have seen, heard and spoken the word, they are instructed to transcribe it. When they have had sufficient practice in writing it out, the mere sound of the word will be enough to enable the pupils to write it out. As soon as they are able to understand, words should be presented in a context, say in sentences. In prescribing words or sentences for transcription it will add both to interest and usefulness if words prescribed for transcription have something in common in pronunciation or spelling, e.g. *rat, cat, mat, sat, hat*. Short sentences using them may be constructed, written on the blackboard and given to the class for transcription.

The start should always be made with words of easy phonetic spelling and it is only when the class has had enough grounding in them that the transition to the unphonetic spelling should be made.

XIII

SPELLING AND READING

As soon as pupils in junior classes can read and understand short sentences without much difficulty, they should be encouraged to do a good deal of rapid reading outside their books. They should be asked to note down new words they have come across in the course of their reading and to become familiar with them either by revolving them in their minds and thereby forming a vivid mental picture of them, or by using them in their own sentences and writing them a number of times. Ordinarily a boy who spells badly has not read much. He who is fond of reading and reads rapidly and yet carefully is seldom a bad speller.

Some writers have been so impressed by the close connexion between rapid and careful reading on the one hand and correct spelling on the other that they have vehemently advocated the complete elimination of all formal teaching of spelling. As P. Chubb says in *The Teaching of English*, 'Do not be fussy about spelling. Good reading, clear enunciation and the ear training that goes with it will do more for spelling than the routine of the spelling book.'

The objections that were cited against leaving all spelling to incidental teaching may well be repeated here. Reading is a great help in the learning of correct spelling, as spelling is a matter for the eye, and the more familiar the eye becomes with the correct spelling of words the less

liable it is to errors in spelling. But that does not mean that reading alone is enough and can replace the systematic teaching of spelling. In the first place, Indian pupils do very little reading in English. And the small number that does so is carried from sentence to sentence and page to page by the absorbing interest of the matter itself. They have neither the time nor the interest to attend to the sequence of constituent symbols in words. It is better so, for too much attention to spelling is a great danger to thought acquisition, which is the primary aim of all reading and which has certainly far greater educational value. Secondly, spelling is a process in which we study the several symbol elements of words while in reading we recognize the word as a whole, and not piecemeal, letter by letter.

The ABC method of teaching English drew no distinction between reading and spelling. The two subjects were taught as though they were one and the same. But spelling is essential only when one is trying to express ideas in writing. When one writes, one must know the letters which make up particular words. But in reading one recognizes words as units, as wholes. If the process of writing were to be closely analysed it would be found that spelling is essentially an analytical process. In order to be efficient in spelling one must be able to attend closely to each letter in a word. On the other hand a good reader jumps from word to word or from phrase to phrase. He quickly recognizes larger units. Thus reading and spelling instead of being identical are directly

opposed to each other. Spelling is analytical, reading is synthetical.

Present-day teaching methods stress reading by the word method instead of the alphabet method. It often happens that children taught to read by the word method are bad spellers. Their percepts of words are not detailed, they recognize words by their general form, their length and even by their initial alphabets. They do not analyse words in order to recognize the alphabets of which the word is composed. The truth of this statement will be understood more clearly when on assessment of common errors in spelling it is found that the largest number is to be found occurring in the middle of a word. The initial alphabet is seldom misspelt. The end of a word is also less frequently misspelt than its middle. This supports the view that spelling is an analytical process, while reading is a synthetic process and the former cannot be taught only through, or along with, reading.

But, of course, reading does offer to young pupils rich opportunities of becoming familiar with words, and this familiarity means among other things, familiarity with their spelling. Reading is not a *method* of teaching spelling, but is a good *aid* to it.

XIV

SPELLING AND PRONUNCIATION

It is difficult to connect English spelling with pronunciation. With some pupils an early grounding in phonetics helps, and with others it positively hinders correct spelling. It has been noticed in the Southern Punjab that a number of pupils even in the high school classes pronounce *s* as *sh* and vice versa. They carry this defect into their spelling and write *short* for *sort* or *sock* for *shock*. Such pupils need very badly a thorough grounding in phonetics, and the earlier such defects are detected and treated the better. Defective pronunciation may be a source of bad spelling, and the teacher, during the course of the lesson, should stress phonetic peculiarities and secure accurate pronunciation of each new word that the class learns.

But good pronunciation may spoil spelling as much. A number of Indian pupils in European schools develop an English accent and pronunciation without improving appreciably in spelling. They would write *sure* as *shure* or *bridge* as *brij*. They will have to be taught spelling independently of their pronunciation.

Quite a number of words are spelt according to their pronunciation, and all that these need is a clear and distinct enunciation, for example, *proof*, *task*, *morning*, *children*.

While teaching the reader, some of the common sound combinations may be stressed and repeated in different contexts, as for example,

| | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| beat | look | rope | come |
| eat | book | rose | some |
| seat | foot | home | |
| meat | good | rode | |
| neat | wood | bone | |

A number of English words have common sound elements and many of them will be correctly spelt if they are broken into component units. For example,

dic-ta-tion
mo-di-fi-ca-tion
sta-tion

ca-pa-bi-lity
com-pa-ri-son
sa-ga-ci-ty

XV

SPELLING AND DRILL

THE old method of drill, according to which pupils sat in a row and spelt aloud in a simultaneous sing-song a prescribed list of words, is to be strongly disparaged and banned, for it is a flagrant violation of our present-day knowledge of psychology. But there is a danger that with the modern conception of the problem there may be too strong a reaction against the method of drill. No doubt drill is mechanical, dull and uninteresting, but it should not be overlooked that it is the only means by which any habit can be formed. Drill has a definite place in the teaching and learning of spelling. Moreover in the early years of school the knowledge of a child is very meagre, and drill, a mere constant repetition of the little he knows, gives him the fullest sense and joy of individual achievement and of

effective self-assertion. At this stage therefore drill may be introduced with advantage. The old method of drill was defective because it lacked motive and interest. If spelling drill is motivated to arouse among children the maximum of self-activity and if it is varied enough to appeal to children of different 'memory types', it is sure to yield results of which any teacher may be proud.

A few types of drill are given in XVI-XIX.

XVI

ORAL DRILL

A WORD is pronounced and spelt by the teacher and a number of pupils are called upon at random to repeat the spelling. The rest of the class listen to the spelling and at last one of them is asked to write the spelling of the word on the blackboard, just to reinforce the auditory impression with the visual impression of the word. Another variation of this type of oral drill is to ask every pupil in turn to spell letter by letter a word written on the black-board and end by pronouncing it as a whole. This oral drill is very helpful with the junior pupils.

XVII

MOTOR DRILL

A WORD is written on the blackboard and the class is called upon to transcribe it as many times as they can within a given period, say of five minutes: or the word may be spoken and the class expected to give its spelling. As soon as correct spelling is obtained, the teacher should warn them to be ready with their pens and copies and to write that word twenty times. He who does so first may stand at his seat as a mark of distinction. Rapid movements in writing and repeating the correct spelling of a word are very useful in fixing it.

XVIII

VISUAL DRILL

A BIG slate is taken and a word is written on it in large block letters. The class is informed that a word will be shown to them, and then the slate is exposed to the class for five seconds at the most. After that the class is expected to reproduce orally or in writing the spelling of that word. The latter is better, for ultimately it is in writing that spelling matters. If the class is warned of the shortness of time, they will concentrate their attention when the word is shown to them and the results will certainly be more satisfactory. Instead of the slate, pieces of cardboard

may be used and the words printed on them in big letters.

Of these three forms of drill, motor drill is very useful, partly because spelling is a motor habit acquired by repeated motor responses to sensory stimuli, and partly because the other types of visual and oral drill may be easily co-ordinated by motor drill. Children do see what they write and they can pronounce the word after they have written it. On the other hand oral and visual types of drill by themselves do not make good spellers, for as has already been pointed out, the need of correct spelling arises only in writing, and it is in writing alone that habits of correct spelling can be most successfully formed.

Another reason why the old method of drill was defective is that it was collective. The class spelt words in chorus. There was no room for spontaneity, competition, self-assertion or interest. The individual was submerged in the class and many of them merely followed the leader in a chorus and themselves learnt very little. So the first requisite in administering drill is that it should as far as possible be always individual.

To make spelling interesting and to provide a motive for it, spelling games may be introduced with advantage. Effective drill given through games, examples of which are given hereinafter, will help the teacher to achieve what he has hitherto only desired.

Another question which is sure to be asked in connexion with spelling drill is how much time should be allotted to it. It all depends upon the previous attainment of the class. Ordinarily

fifteen minutes a week just after the dictation lesson will be found quite sufficient, considering that translation, composition and reading lessons are frequently providing opportunities for stressing peculiarities in spelling. Junior classes will need more time.

XIX

THE DRILL LESSON

THE direct aim of the drill lesson is to mechanize knowledge and experience, and to make it function as a habit. Two steps seem to be necessary to that end. The first is to explain to the pupils very clearly the facts or processes on which drill is going to be given and the second is to provide exercises for repetition in attention.

The most serious danger to the drill lesson is that it is seldom a unity. That is, it is very rarely devoted to any one particular point, rule or difficulty. Now and then a particular difficulty proves a stumbling block to the class, and that may be selected and made the subject of varied but intensive drill.

Let us illustrate it.

One of the most common spelling errors that persists in the written work of high school pupils is the confusion of the words *there* and *their*. Explain to the class their peculiar meanings and usage. *There* may mean *in* or *at that place* or it may be used as an *expletive*, that is, a word used to introduce a sentence.

Put the books *there*.

What is that dog doing *there*?

I stopped *there* for a few minutes.

or

There is a piece of chalk on the table.

Once *there* was a king.

There is plenty to eat.

Their means of *those* people.

Their books are dirty.

They leave *their* books in *their* desks.

Their cow is white.

There is an adverb modifying a verb or an expletive introducing a sentence. *Their* is a possessive pronoun and is almost always used before a noun.

Exercises

1. From the first lesson of your Reader pick out the first six sentences illustrating the use of *their* and *there* and write them down in your notebooks.

2. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with *there*, or *their*:

(a) Have the boys left — caps in — rooms?

(b) — is no fun in crying all day.

(c) Call out — names and ask them to sit —.

(d) Not a sound was — to show — presence.

(e) — was no one —.

(f) What sense is — in — boasting of — wealth over — in public?

(g) Where — is a will — is a way.

(h) — was a group of girls who cleaned — shoes with — own hands.

Again, suppose the class cannot spell the word *coming*, and continually make the mistake of putting in an additional *m*. Meet the class half-way by anticipating it, if a number of the pupils

have made the mistake; but confine yourself to individuals if only a few are guilty of it. Spell the word letter by letter, writing the word meanwhile on the board, summing up with a remark on the difficulty. 'There is only one *m* in *coming*. Now write this word six times in your books.'

Such difficulties should be very carefully handled and vigorous drill should follow the preliminary explanation. The correct form should be impressed upon the pupils through repetition in writing. No doubt such repetition will be found irksome by the pupils, but the danger of making everything interesting should not be overlooked. As W. Bagley says, 'If the pupil does not sometimes find his school work disagreeable, then something is radically wrong either with the pupil or with the school or with both.'

If the class fails to distinguish between the final *-ar*, *-er* and *-or* in words, let them have an example of each written on the board, and then ask them to find ten words of each form. They will enjoy this collection, and should be encouraged to find more. As soon as they have finished, ask them to go over the lists once again and then to close their books or turn over the page. Then they should be called upon to make up their lists from memory and they should be encouraged to make use of the dictionary whenever they feel in doubt, for it is very necessary that they should never write the wrong form. This may later be tested through dictation. There is no harm if the lists are compiled for the second time on the blackboard and the pupils

refer to them even when the dictation test is being given. With junior pupils this procedure is very essential, for it will save them from mistakes which only serve to impress upon the pupils the wrong forms of words and whose possibility therefore should as far as possible be ruled out.

English spelling is not amenable to any hard and fast rules. Still it has not escaped the generalizing capacity of the teacher. And generalizations are convenient if too much stress is not laid on them. When the class obstinately continues making a particular kind of mistake, the teacher has no remedy but to offer a rough sort of rule. For example, pupils often experience a difficulty with *ei* and *ie* combinations, and the teacher cannot help giving them the rule. This is best expressed by the tag '*i* before *e*, except after *c*'. Thus we have: *receive*, *receipt*, *deceive*, *conceive*, *ceiling*, *perceive*, spelt with *ei*, while *believe*, *relieve*, *grief*, *brief*, *siege*, *yield*, *niece*, etc. are spelt with *ie*. (Exception: *seize*.)

Give the class some time either to transcribe these words in their notebooks or fix them in memory by looking at the blackboard on which these words are written. Then give them drill through dictation of some such sentences as:

If you think you have been deceived, do not give any receipt for the ceiling fan you have received.

Believe me that the seige was a brief one. No sooner did the army perceive their loss than, struck with grief, they yielded to the besiegers.

I am very grieved to receive your letter.

Passages for such drill should be specially selected or written by the teacher himself to meet

the requirements of his lessons. When spelling is taught through such drills and tests there is a greater likelihood of the correct forms being more firmly fixed in the minds of the pupils.

Two things however should be borne in mind. In the first place words which form the subject-matter of the drill lesson should as far as possible be given in their context. They should almost always be used in sentences during the course of the drill lesson. The need of correct spelling arises only in our everyday written expression, and it is in writing alone, more particularly in their peculiar usages, that the spelling of words should be taught. Secondly, in making use of the devices the teacher should never let the main purpose be lost in them. Often there is a tendency both for the class and the teacher to begin thinking that these devices are the be-all and the end-all of all their effort. Nothing would be more harmful to the drill lesson.

XX

SPELLING AND DICTATION

SPELLING is closely associated with dictation and a discussion of the objects and methods of the dictation lesson will not be entirely out of place.

On an average a teacher of English allots one period a week to dictation. A passage is dictated to the class, difficult words are spelt on the black-board, boys exchange their exercise books and mark corrections in each other's dictations, the teacher ascertains the number of mistakes each

pupil has committed and asks them to write the correct spelling of their mistakes till the bell rings to the relief of the teacher and his class. The method and practice are not far wrong but some of the aims and objects of the lesson are thrown into the background and they will be discussed here.

It is said that dictation teaches spelling. This is more an assumption than the result of analytical thinking. Dictation as a method of teaching spelling has lost its hold on modern teachers and all those whose opinion matters. For experimental investigations have shown that the spelling of children who have been reared on dictation is not appreciably better than those to whom this privilege has been denied. Spelling is a matter for the eye rather than for the ear, and intensive and extensive reading are far more likely to benefit spelling than the sounding of letters and the saying of words, for the latter do not of necessity recall the written form of words. These considerations led Mr Tomkinson to make the bold statement, 'Dictation does not and cannot teach, and never has taught, spelling.'¹

Though dictation is not of any direct help in the teaching of spelling, it is of great value in fixing spelling already acquired. Pupils are called upon to concentrate on the correct reproduction by memory of the forms of words, and this makes associations between letters, as well as between the auditory and the visual images of a word, more firm.

¹ Op. cit., p. 165.

Fixing spelling is a matter of habit, and because in the formation of habits there should be no breaks, exceptions or concessions, it is necessary, as Professor B. Dumville points out, that: 'Dictation as an exercise, as a means of fixing spelling should not involve mistakes. When it does, it leads to a further fixing of wrong associations. Even though right ones are given later, and repeated again and again, the early errors leave their traces. And the dull boy may remain confused between the right and the wrong for a long time. . . . Dictation should be considered as a means of further fixing by repetition under new circumstances—the circumstances of writing which are the only ones where correct spelling becomes necessary—what is already fairly well known. The stupid teacher might object that, if every boy gets all his dictation right, nothing is accomplished, since the boys evidently knew all the words beforehand. But he would be forgetting that the spelling of these words has been more firmly fixed.'¹

If dictation is not a fruitful method of teaching correct spelling, it is at least a good test of it. It reveals what words an individual pupil misspells and that therefore he should have further practice in them.

When the teacher gives dictation to his class, he should decide whether he is giving an exercise in fixing spelling already acquired or a test of what they already know. In the former case, the passage should almost always be taken from the

¹ *Fundamentals of Psychology*, p. 216 (University Tutorial Press).

texts pupils are expected to have read recently, and in this case the exercise should be of fairly frequent occurrence; and in the latter case it should have been specially constructed or selected to test whether pupils have acquired the spelling of definite words.

Dictation trains the hearing capacity of the pupils. It makes the ear more sensitive to spoken words, either to hear the syllables and their component elements one by one, or to catch the word as a whole and the order of sounds in uttering the letters and syllables.

The passage at first should be read out as a whole to the class, and then dictated, pausing at regular intervals at the end of each phrase in a sentence. These pauses should be as many as possible, and no attempt should be made to hurry through. The very act of dictation, if pauses are judiciously scattered over the passage, should help the pupil to comprehend the meaning of the passage and thus avoid all confusion in spelling.

It is very important that during the dictation lesson no questions should be permitted. Perfect silence and attention should be enjoined. Students should first listen and then write, and no phrase or part of the sentence should be spoken more than once or it will upset those in the act of writing.

It follows from what has been said above that passages for dictation should be carefully selected. They should not contain too many unfamiliar proper names. Indian students experience a peculiar difficulty in spelling English names of

persons and places. Special care should be taken that boys write out the correct spelling of misspelt words a number of times. It is a good plan for pupils to keep a list of such words on the last few pages of their exercise books where they can look them up from time to time.

XXI

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

As has already been said above, pupils should only be taught in their written expression words which they have already learnt to use. It is a sheer waste of time and energy if they are taught to spell words they are not going to use in their actual composition. The teacher should select words from the written work of the class. They should be common, familiar words which the class may be reasonably expected to have mastered to such an extent that they can freely employ them in their free composition.

New words should never be introduced in an off hand manner. Just as new persons introduced unceremoniously are apt to be forgotten, similarly new words introduced in a casual slipshod manner are apt soon to slip. Arouse the interest of the pupil in the new word and relate it to words or matter already under reference.

In correcting written work teachers should not merely mark errors in spelling but write out the correct order of letters on the blackboard or in the boy's notebook. Later on he should be asked to write out the correct spelling a number of

times. This practice will serve to eradicate from the mind habits of bad spelling and replace them by new ones of correct spelling. Such corrections should be written on one of the allotted pages in the notebook to which easy reference can be made now and then.

The blackboard should be the constant companion of the teacher of spelling. Whenever the spelling of any word is to be taught, it should invariably be written on the blackboard either by the teacher or by one of the class. It will be of great help to the pupils in imaging words. Special difficulties should be kept on the blackboard in sight of the class, and the pupils should be encouraged to examine these whenever they have a moment to spare.

But the teacher should never exhibit wrong forms on the blackboard. A number of teachers, in order to deride the defaulter and amuse the class at his expense, display wrongly spelt words on the blackboard. Even when this practice is resorted to with the express object of calling upon other pupils to detect and correct any particular kind of error, it is positively harmful, for it indirectly helps to impress upon the class forms of bad spelling which they might later confuse with correct ones. The correct spelling should be given immediately and impressed on the pupils as soon as possible.

In this connexion another plan has been found very useful. After having corrected the written work of the class, the teacher should make up a list of words which most of them have misspelt. The list should be very small and the words in-

cluded in it should be those which every pupil of that standard ought to be able to spell. It would be better if the number of words does not exceed six. These words should be printed in big block letters on pieces of cardboard and they may be hung on the walls of the class room for a week till they are replaced by others.

It is very essential in the specific teaching of spelling that only a few words should be presented at a time. In the first place such a practice will help the teacher to bring in spelling whenever he likes. A few words brought to the attention of the class will not take much time. It will make the specific systematic teaching of spelling appear quite incidental and thus help to take away much of the tedium that is associated with the teaching as well as the learning of spelling. Thirdly, it will help the pupils to give due attention to the words, which will thus be easily fixed in their minds. The teacher should not feel perturbed over it. Even if a pupil only learns four words a day, before long he will have mastered the spelling of quite a number of words.

Pupils should be allowed to write on the blackboard the spelling of words taught and there should be regular tests through dictation. What is taught must be regularly revised and tested.

Since for correct spelling pupils should be able to recognize words as wholes, and also as piecemeal, letter by letter, the treatment of words should be both synthetical and analytical. Not only should pupils be drilled into the correct spelling of words, but also stress should be laid

on their component sounds and their letters. A number of pupils will be found in almost every class who cannot learn correct spelling unless the words are broken into letters and their parts emphasized. For them the teacher should try to discover the difficulty in a word and draw attention to it. Errors in spelling usually consist in certain letters or parts of words only. For example, in the word *travelling*, *travel* doubles its final letter. So do *run*, *stop*, *beg*, *hit*, etc. in *running*, *stopping*, *begging*, *hitting*. The word *always* is written with one *l*. So are *almost*, *already*, *altogether*, *also*. By means of such a study the teacher should be able to anticipate the probable misspellings and to call special attention to the letters likely to be missed or misplaced. The difficulty ceases to be a difficulty as soon as it is singled out and the attention of the class is drawn to it. Particular emphasis may be secured by asking the pupils to focalize the correct order of the letters which are usually confused, either by underlining the difficult part of the word, or by writing it in block letters, or by printing them in larger or heavier type, as follows:

| | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| recEIVE | receive | receive |
| decEIVE | deceive | deceive |
| cEILING | ceiling | ceiling |
| sEIZE | seize | seize |

Any teacher who has had experience of teaching spelling will know that almost every pupil has his own individual vocabulary and his difficulties are peculiar to him. The teacher will do

well to encourage his pupils to keep, on an allotted page, a record of the mistakes they commonly make, and this he should examine every week to form an adequate estimate of their difficulties. His spelling list should always be based on the lists compiled by the class, and he should try as far as possible to give prominence to the individual difficulties of his class.

In the spelling lesson the pupils should be called upon to do an adequate share of the work. Instead of writing words on the board straight-away and asking pupils to transcribe them, it would be much more useful if the pupils were to build up the spelling of these words by mutual correction. In teaching new words in the reading, translation or composition lesson, it would add to the zest of the work if the teacher, by suggesting the first and even the second or third letter, calls upon the class to guess the suitable word.

Another very important method is the presentation of words in groups formed on some intelligible plan. This topic will be dealt with under a separate heading.

Lastly, it should be remembered that bad spelling is frequently due to carelessness rather than ignorance. Recently, correcting the composition of an Intermediate student, the writer came across the word *mechinery*. He asked him, 'Can't you spell *machinery*?' and at once came the answer, 'Yes, sir, it ought to be *a* instead of *e*.' Boys often do their work carelessly, and many of the mistakes they make they could have corrected without any external aid, if they had cared to look over their writing again.

and looked up in the dictionary the spelling of words about which they were not confident. Boys should be inspired to be proud of their written work and to read it over again as soon as it is finished. Such bad spelling as is due to a mere slip of the pen will then be avoided.

XXII

GROUPING OF SPELLING WORDS

THE method of presenting spelling words in groups has a good deal to be said for it. Such groups are formed on definite similarities in spelling, pronunciation or meaning, and serve to classify spelling mistakes and pitfalls. Classification if it is done on some rational plan makes for an easier grasp of the material. Words grouped in sections, small but having prominent sound or sight elements common to their members, will be more easily, rapidly and permanently mastered. Such groups are of very great help to the memory, specially when it is almost impossible to lay down any hard and fast rules. Some time back the writer had a class in which a large number of pupils did not know how to spell some of the very common and simple words. One day some of them wrote *comming* for *coming*, and it set him thinking as to what words generally double their final consonant in verbal forms ending in *-ing*. In the absence of any definite rules he was forced to form groups of those that double and those that do not double their final consonant. He wrote two words, *getting* and

running, on the blackboard and said to the class, 'Now let us have more examples of the verbs which double their final consonant.' A number of students raised their hands and took their turn at the blackboard to write *cutting*, *beginning*, *begging*, *dropping*, *travelling*, and so on. Now interest was sharpened and there were mutual corrections and appeals. Later these words were transcribed in one group. Similarly a group was formed of those that do not double their final consonant. In their subsequent written work, associations by contiguity must have helped the students to find out to what group any particular word belonged and thus to reproduce its correct spelling.

Spelling words may be variously grouped.

(1) They may be grouped together because of some common element in spelling, so that they make a similar auditory and visual appeal, as for example:

| | | |
|-------|--------|---------|
| feet | each | dense |
| sheet | reach | sense |
| sweet | teach | tense |
| fleet | breach | expense |
| greet | preach | intense |

Not only do such groups emphasize common sound or visual elements in a number of words, but they also provide ample scope for drill which is essential for setting habits of any kind.

(2) Words may be grouped together because they have the same difficulty in spelling, as for example:

| | | |
|--------|--------|--------|
| honey | money | monkey |
| storey | donkey | key |

They have the same endings, which is often a source of difficulty for the pupils.

sugar
similar

pillar
grammar

beggar
singular

are spelt with *-ar*.

bush
gas

bench
box

match
mass

form their plural by adding *es*.

(3) Words may be grouped together because they have a common silent letter, as for example:

sign
reign
resign
sovereign

doubt
debt
tomb
thumb

know
knight
knee
knife

(4) Words may be grouped together because they have a common context, as for example:

train
luggage
illness
medicine

railway
porter
patient
nurse

ticket
whistle
doctor
cough

fare
guard
disease
fever

and so on.

These groups will form the best preparation for the composition lesson, and once they are correctly spelt in free expression, they will be permanently fixed in the minds of the pupils. Such groups will be specially helpful to the Indian students who have no other opportunity to learn these words or to express themselves in English except in the weekly composition they write.

(5) A number of words may be grouped together because they are identical or similar in

sound but differ both in spelling and meaning. They are a source of considerable confusion to Indian pupils and deserve much more attention than has hitherto been bestowed on them. Examples of these are:

| | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| there | sees | right | to |
| their | seas | write | too |
| | seize | | two |

These words have to be carefully and skilfully handled. Each word should be used in sentences, its meaning explained and its usage illustrated, as for example:

Once *there* lived a farmer. I reached *there* in time. Who comes *there*? *There* is used as an adverb. It comes before or after a verb.

Where have the children gone? *Their* books are torn, *their* shoes and caps are lying here and *their* parents are looking out for them. *Their* is the possessive form of *they* and is used as an adjective. It generally comes before a noun.

He *sees* a crow. She *sees* another bird. Ram *sees* the doctor in the hospital. *Sees* is the singular form of the verb *to see* and is always used after a third person singular noun or pronoun.

For many months they sailed the high *seas*. In the monsoon there are clouded skies and heavy *seas*. *Seas* is the plural form of the noun *sea*.

In a tug-of-war the players on each side *seize* the rope. You must *seize* your opportunity when it comes. *Seize* is a transitive verb meaning *to catch*. In this form it is used as the verb of a subject in the plural number.

Later on students should be asked to make up their own sentences illustrating the use of each

word. Often etymology or parsing of these words will be helpful in fixing distinctions in the minds of the pupils. This may later be tested through dictation when a passage using them alternately is given to the class.

Some teachers object to the teaching of homonyms together on the ground that they cause needless confusion which probably was not present before. This is bound to be the case when one of them happens to be unknown to the class. For example it would be foolish to teach a primary class the distinction between *idle* and *idol*, the former of which they know and the latter of which they are not likely to know for some time to come. But there will be no danger if the class has already begun using both of them and fails to distinguish between them. The best plan will be to teach them separately and then together for the sake of contrast. It is a very common experience that even high school pupils fail to distinguish between common homonyms such as *there* and *their*; *tale* and *tail*; *blue* and *blew*. Such difficulties are multiplied in a dictation test and deserve careful teaching and testing.

A very important caution that deserves to be borne in mind is that only one group should be taught at any one time. There is much to be said in favour of the practice of devoting a few minutes every day to each group. Often grouping is a source of numerous and serious errors, but this is always the result of presenting too many words at a time or too many groups one after the other. Some time should be allowed to elapse before the second group is presented.

XXIII

THE PLAY WAY IN THE TEACHING
OF SPELLING

Too often the spelling lesson is very tedious and dull but it need not be if the interests of children are appealed to and the work is given a motive. Let the teacher infuse into the class a healthy play spirit by devising games or competitions, and he will find that the class is stimulated to make an effort and concentrate on work which they previously found irksome and monotonous. The play way methods serve to offset the mechanical boredom of the spelling lesson. They will sharpen the spirit of healthy emulation among pupils, combine recreation with learning, and help to develop useful habits. A few games are described here.

(1) One of the most fascinating of spelling games is the making of many words out of the component letters of one given word. A word is written on the blackboard preferably in capital letters and the pupils are asked to make by using any of its letters, as many words as they can out of it within a given time.

Take for example the word TEACHER. Write it on the blackboard and draw two lines to make three columns. The class should do the same in their notebooks. Now ask the class to put down in the first column words of three letters, in the second column words of four letters, and in the third column words of five letters. If necessary

one example may be written in each of them, as follows:

TEACHER

tea

each

teach

The following was the longest list given by a student in one of the classes and many students were surprised to discover that as many as forty-five words could be formed out of it.

| | | |
|-----|------|-------|
| tea | each | teach |
| art | care | reach |
| ate | hear | earth |
| are | cart | chart |
| arc | tear | heart |
| eat | hare | there |
| ere | ache | trace |
| car | race | cheat |
| ear | chat | cheer |
| the | acre | react |
| act | arch | erect |
| her | rate | retch |
| cat | hate | |
| rat | heat | |
| era | char | |
| ace | hart | |
| hat | | |
| tar | | |

A healthy competitive spirit can be fostered by telling the class how many words can be formed and that he who is the first to form, say, twenty words should come forward and write his name on the board with his number. Then whoever forms five more rubs off the name of his predecessor and writes his own till no more words can be formed. But this may interest only

a few. Another way and a more useful one is to ask every pupil by turn to contribute one word to the list. He who fails keeps standing.

This individual competition may be replaced by group competition by classifying pupils into groups of four or five so that they may co-operate with each other in building up their lists. The former aims at a comparison of ability between individuals while the latter helps to inculcate a spirit of mutual comradeship and helpfulness.

It is better if the teacher first tries his own hand at the game and finds out the maximum number of words that can be formed from a given word before he gives that word to the class. It will interest him to know how many words can be formed from some very common words. The word *relations* gives as many as seventy words, *rheumatic* more than eighty and *indigestion* more than seventy words. Words like *examination*, *schedule*, *building*, will yield quite a wide scope for this kind of exercise. More words may easily be found by the teacher himself.

(2) Another game that will engage the class for a longer time is to divide the class into two groups. The teacher gives one word and asks one group to find a word that begins with the final letter of the given word. The other group then finds another word whose initial letter was the final letter of the word given by the other group. Thus the two groups continue to find words beginning with the final letter of each other's words. The game becomes very interesting when any group corners the other and forces it to form a number of words beginning with the same letter.

It is better if groups work under an elected leader and give words through him. Such words should be written on the blackboard by the leader. This game is capable of arousing the intenser form of team spirit and the teacher will do well to preserve it by fixing some plan of scoring.

(3) Another interesting game is connected with the dictionary. Young pupils should be persuaded to use the dictionary more often. Three or four words may be uttered by the teacher and the class asked to find their spelling in the dictionary and transcribe them in their notebooks in as short a time as possible. He who does so first stands up. Or the pupils may be asked to locate the words written on the blackboard in the dictionary and find out the pages on which they appear.

(4) The teacher may write previously learnt words on the blackboard in a different order of letters and call upon pupils at random to form words by setting the letters in their right order, as for example:

| | |
|---------|-----------|
| retetl | (letter) |
| aalswy | (always) |
| ceellgo | (college) |
| theig | (eight) |

This game is very useful in teaching, fixing and testing spelling. The pupils enjoy these anagrams very much and find it an interesting substitute for indoor games.

(5) A dozen words or so are written on the blackboard and the class is asked to go over their spelling mentally. Then one pupil is called upon to stand with his back towards the

blackboard and the rest of the class test him in the spelling of words written on the blackboard. If he succeeds in spelling five of them he has the right to nominate his successor who is subjected to this test. Or if he fails to spell correctly his place is taken by the student who caused his failure.

(6) In dealing with groups of words having common elements of spelling and pronunciation, an interesting game can be arranged by writing one of them on the board and expecting others to make up the group by writing others on the blackboard. The teacher writes *actor* on the board and calls upon the class to find out more words which end with *-or*. The class will be aroused to mental effort and will be anxious to maintain themselves worthily. Pupils may be asked to raise their hands or the teacher may start calling upon each one of them. Those who fail to contribute one word keep standing. Soon they will have a list of words:

| | | |
|---------|------------|-----------|
| author | sailor | error |
| tailor | major | minor |
| monitor | horror | equator |
| traitor | pallor | motor |
| liquor | protector | bachelor |
| suitor | translator | spectator |

and so on.

These games and others which every teacher who needs them can think out for himself will be enjoyed by almost every class of students. Experiments with high school boys have shown that they too welcome them. That these games have a value of their own will be evident to all those who care to give them a trial. They help

to sharpen the interest of the class and provide a spirit of hopefulness and zest in which more and better work is possible.

Moreover, appealing to the interest of the pupils as they do, these word games are calculated to impress upon them the correct spelling of words. For it is a well-known fact that we are able to remember things better if they are presented to our minds in some manner that appeals to our interest.

XXIV.

RESEARCH IN SPELLING

RESEARCH is an attitude of inquiry and of willingness to test all that we think and do against the evidence of most carefully analysed and sifted body of available facts. In England and America the methods of research are being increasingly applied to test and reconstruct teaching practices, but in India objective methods of experimentation, investigation and study in the field of education have not made appreciable headway. The study and teaching of English and the several items involved in it are the subject of numerous and varied studies in the West, and there is a large amount of available data on which discriminating teachers of English in India draw to revise and reconstruct their attitudes, devices and methods, but the peculiar 'social climate' in which the study and teaching of English is placed in India, particularly after the attainment of independence, calls for an independent approach to the problems of the teaching

and study of English in Indian schools. It is not possible to detail the several topics which are crying for study and research at the hands of teachers of English in India in a small book dealing with the teaching of English spelling, but it is considered highly desirable that even in a restricted field like the teaching of English spelling some effort should be made to experiment and investigate.

Broadly speaking such investigations can be made in two directions, firstly to determine the content of the spelling curriculum, and secondly to discover the most effective and economical methods of teaching English spelling. The place of English in the school curriculum has still to stabilize, but it is assured a place of importance in the final analysis of things. Some of the research projects connected with the teaching of English spelling in Indian schools are enumerated here.

At what stage should spelling in English be taught?

What is the writing vocabulary of Indian children in English?

✓ Are there any words which Indian pupils generally misspell?

✓ What are their common spelling difficulties?

There are generally two methods of teaching English, the direct method and the translation method, not to speak of a mixture of both.

✓ Does spelling attainment differ with the method of teaching? ✓ Does classification of words according to spelling similarities help?

✓ Does spelling ability bear any relation to the IQ of pupils?

What are the main causes of bad spelling in high schools?

Does self-correction of spelling errors help?

Does the habit of dictionary use help?

Determination of word lists for each age group.

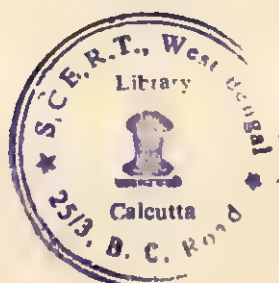
The study habits of successful spellers.

Tests to diagnose spelling disability.

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SPELLING LISTS



A NOTE ON THE USE OF SPELLING LISTS

APPENDIX I

There are three groups of words arranged in order of difficulty. They illustrate simple vowel sounds and the teacher should write one of each group on the blackboard and ask his pupils to put down as many words as they can of similar sounds. A good drilling is necessary.

APPENDIX II

Groups of words similar in spelling. The teacher should take care to deal with these groups one by one so that no word of the one is dealt with along with any word of the other.

APPENDIX III

Groups of words with silent letters. The teacher should write one of each group on the blackboard and ask the pupils to find others of that group.

APPENDIX IV

Pairs of words having similar or identical sounds but differing in spelling and meaning. They should be used in sentences, their meanings explained and their usages illustrated. Later on the pupils should be asked to make up their own sentences, illustrating the use of each one of them. Often etymology or parsing of these words will be helpful in fixing distinctions in the minds of the pupils.

APPENDIX V

Further groups of words having similar spelling elements which should help to suggest how teachers may form their own groups incidentally for their classes.

APPENDIX VI

Three lists of words A, B and C. Every student who goes up for the High School Examination in India should be able to spell them aright. They have been made up from the written work of the ninth and tenth classes and will be helpful in marking key words in any passage for dictation and also serve as an easy reference.

MEASURING SCALE

| Students | No. of key words | No. of errors | Percentage of correction | Percentage for the class |
|----------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A | 20 | 6 | 70 | ... |
| B | ... | 7 | 65 | ... |
| C | ... | 5 | 75 | ... |
| D | ... | 8 | 60 | ... |
| E | ... | 3 | 85 | 78 |
| F | ... | 1 | 95 | ... |
| G | ... | 5 | 75 | ... |
| H | ... | 4 | 80 | ... |
| I | ... | 3 | 85 | ... |
| J | ... | 2 | 90 | ... |

At the end of a term averages for individuals may be calculated to find out what progress they have made.

APPENDIX I

GROUP 1

man
can
band

cat
bat
sat

cap
lap
map

get
wet
net

bed
leg
beg

hen
men
pen

red

sit
bit
sick

sing
bring
tick

big
fig
dig

hill
pill
mill

hot
pot
not

dog
cock
rob

stop
shop
frog

rod
fox
of

run
sun
jug

cup
shut
thumb

tub
but
gun

hard
yard
half

grass
last
calm

raft
cast
craft

lard
bath

all
tall
ball

walk
talk
hawk

hall
chalk
pall

came
game
slate

age
cage
brave

face
wake
place

ate
gate
made

day
way
play

say
may
pray

pay
clay
bay

APPENDIX I

GROUP 2

| | | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| black slap | lamb add | glad rag | plan drag | |
| lamp | camp | bank | | |
| deck neck | fed den | set sell | egg | |
| stick ship | rich slip | begin hit | still fill | |
| shot crop | cross rock | soft lock | god blot | |
| fun sun | much sum | such drum | dug pup | |
| pass mast | mark hark | marsh harsh | balm calf | |
| small call stall | halt malt | bald stalk | want | |
| frame shape | slave cave | ale lame | stage plate | trade safe |
| more | shore | | | |
| pole | hole | robe | wrote | |

GROUP 3

| | | | |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| wrap van | crack clad | cram strap | slab pad |
| shed sex | dress fret | speck glen | flesh less |

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| knit | slim | drill | | |
| spit | twin | chill | | |
| flog | sob | block | | |
| spot | mob | stock | | |
| bug | cuff | bun | gut | club |
| drug | shun | chum | spun | |
| shame | knave | shade | space | |
| shake | shave | grade | paste | |
| aid | sail | pail | paid | |
| main | wail | maim | raid | |

APPENDIX II

GROUP 1

Words in which -ea- sounds as -ce-

| | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| beat | neat | heat | eat |
| meat | seat | cheat | bleat |
| treat | | | |
| read | lead | knead | plead |
| bead | | | |
| meal | deal | heal | weal |
| seal | zeal | peal | teal |
| beak | peak | weak | leak |
| teak | creak | freak | speak |
| beam | dream | cream | seam |
| ream | team | steam | gleam |
| clean | lean | dean | mean |
| bean | | | |

| | | | |
|--------|----------|--------|----------|
| each | beach | reach | |
| peach | preach | breach | |
| leap | reap | cheap | heap |
| ease | crease | lease | increase |
| please | decrease | grease | cease |
| tease | | | |
| heave | leave | cleave | weave |
| sea | tea | flea | plea |

GROUP 2

Words with -ee-

| | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| feet | meet | sheet | sweet |
| fleet | | | |
| deed | need | seed | heed |
| feed | bleed | greed | speed |
| creed | weed | | |
| feel | heel | kneel | reel |
| week | seek | meek | Greek |
| creek | | | |
| seem | teem | deem | redeem |
| seen | keen | queen | spleen |
| cheese | geese | breeze | wheeze |
| keep | sleep | peep | deep |
| sheep | weep | sweep | steep |
| creep | | | |
| beef | beseech | screech | leech |
| bee | see | fee | wee |

GROUP 3

Words ending in -ite

| | | | |
|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| bite | write | kite | site |
| white | spite | excite | smite |
| recite | trite | sprite | mite |

Words ending in -ight

| | | | |
|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| night | light | fight | right |
| might | sight | bright | tight |
| flight | slight | alight | delight |
| plight | tight | blight | fright |

GROUP 4

Words ending in -ought

| | | | |
|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| ought | brought | fought | thought |
| sought | bought | nought | drought |

Words with -aught-

| | | |
|---------|--------|----------|
| aught | caught | daughter |
| fraught | taught | haughty |

GROUP 5

Words with -o-

| | | | |
|-------|------|------|-------|
| gold | sold | bold | cold |
| host | most | post | ghost |
| sport | port | bolt | fold |
| roll | toll | pole | hole |

Words ending with -o-e

| | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| pole | sole | shore | vote |
| code | rode | dote | note |
| bone | stone | tone | zone |
| pope | rope | hope | home |
| bore | sore | pore | more |
| core | lone | robe | globe |

Words with -oa-

| | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| goat | boat | oat | coat |
| load | goad | toad | road |
| boar | board | hoard | float |
| soap | loaf | roam | moan |
| loan | coal | goal | roar |
| soar | boast | toast | roast |

Words with -ou-

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|-------|
| court | pour | mould | flour |
|-------|------|-------|-------|

Words with -oo-

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|------|
| door | floor | poor | good |
|------|-------|------|------|

GROUP 6

Words ending in -l

| | | | |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| until | fulfil | April | nil |
| council | devil | peril | pencil |
| travel | gravel | panel | barrel |
| camel | chapel | compel | rebel |

Words ending in -ll

| | | | |
|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| till | bill | hill | mill |
| fill | drill | kill | chill |
| pill | still | skill | will |
| twill | spill | gill | rill |
| sell | bell | farewell | dwell |
| swell | dell | | |

Words with -ll-

| | |
|---------|---------|
| woollen | swollen |
|---------|---------|

GROUP 7

Words with -oo- like u in mud

| | |
|-------|-------|
| blood | flood |
|-------|-------|

Words with short sound of -oo-

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| book | good | look | betook |
| wood | hood | nook | forsook |

Words with long sound of -oo-

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| mood | food | spoon | moon |
| noon | fool | tool | cool |

GROUP 8

Nouns which take *-es* in the plural form

Words ending in -ch

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| bench | benches | watch | watches |
| match | matches | coach | coaches |
| church | churches | ditch | ditches |
| peach | peaches | clutch | clutches |
| branch | branches | witch | witches |

Nouns ending in -sh

| | | | |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| brush | brushes | dish | dishes |
| flash | flashes | bush | bushes |
| blush | blushes | slash | slashes |

Nouns ending in -s

| | | | |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| gas | gases | pass | passes |
| dress | dresses | lass | lasses |
| mass | masses | princess | princesses |
| glass | glasses | cross | crosses |

Nouns ending in -x

| | | | |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| box | boxes | fox | foxes |
| sex | sexes | tax | taxes |
| index | indexes | climax | climaxes |
| | hoax | hoaxes | |

Exception: (ox: oxen)

Nouns ending in -z

| | | | |
|--------------|----------------|------------|--------------|
| topaz | topazes | fez | fezes |
|--------------|----------------|------------|--------------|

Nouns ending in -o preceded by a consonant

| | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| mango | mangoes | hero | heroes |
| negro | negroes | potato | potatoes |
| cargo | cargoes | echo | echoes |
| buffalo | buffaloes | motto | mottoes |
| | volcano | volcano | volcanoes |

Exceptions:

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| piano | pianos | canto | cantos |
| halo | halos | dynamo | dynamos |
| | quarto | quartos | |

GROUP 9

Nouns ending in -o preceded by a vowel add -s only in their plural form

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| bamboo | bamboos | cameo | cameos |
| | folio | folios | |

Nouns ending in a consonant followed by -y change to -ies in the plural form

| | | | |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| fly | flies | duty | duties |
| army | armies | city | cities |
| sky | skies | copy | copies |
| lady | ladies | story | stories |
| spy | spies | party | parties |

Nouns ending in -y preceded by a vowel form their plurals by the addition of -s

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| boy | boys | toy | toys |
| key | keys | play | plays |
| monkey | monkeys | valley | valleys |
| storey | storeys | | |

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Nouns ending in -f or -fe form their plurals by changing the -f or -fe to v, and adding -es

| | | | |
|--------|-----------|-------|---------|
| calf | calves | knife | knives |
| myself | ourselves | loaf | loaves |
| leaf | leaves | thief | thieves |

Exceptions:

| | | | |
|-------|--------|-------|--------|
| chief | chiefs | gulf | gulfs |
| proof | proofs | cliff | cliffs |
| grief | griefs | hoof | hoofs |
| dwarf | dwarfs | safe | safes |

GROUP 10

Words ending in -ace

| | | | |
|---------|----------|----------|---------|
| race | ace | face | grace |
| lace | pace | place | space |
| trace | necklace | embrace | surface |
| furnace | terrace | disgrace | deface |

Words ending in -ase

| | | | |
|------|------|------|-------|
| case | base | vase | erase |
|------|------|------|-------|

Words ending in -ass

| | | | |
|--------|-----------|------|-------|
| harass | embarrass | bass | amass |
|--------|-----------|------|-------|

GROUP 11

Words with -oo-; -u-e; -ui-; -o-e and -ui-e, all having the same sound

-oo-

| | | | | |
|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| boot | school | tool | pool | brood |
| spoon | boon | stoop | bloom | boom |
| doom | mood | roof | loom | |

-u-e

| | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-----------|
| flute | brute | yule | rude |
| rule | crude | prude | parachute |

-ui-

| | | |
|-------|------|---------|
| fruit | suit | pursuit |
|-------|------|---------|

-o-e

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| move | prove | lose | whose |
|------|-------|------|-------|

-ui-e

| | | |
|-------|--------|--------|
| juice | cruise | bruise |
|-------|--------|--------|

GROUP 12

Words ending in -ear

| | | | |
|--------|---------|-------|-------|
| appear | dear | ear | fear |
| clear | hear | gear | spear |
| shear | besmear | drear | year |

Words ending in -eer

| | | | |
|----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| beer | cheer | deer | peer |
| seer | queer | steer | sneer |
| career | compeer | domineer | volunteer |
| engineer | auctioneer | reindeer | veneer |

Words ending in -ere

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| mere | sphere | here | atmosphere |
| persevere | interfere | insincere | severe |
| revere | adhere | cohere | sincere |

Words ending in -ier

| | | | |
|---------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| cashier | terrier | barrier | |
| soldier | grenadier | brigadier | carrier |

Note: All adjectives ending in *-y* change to *-ier* in their comparative form, e.g., **merry**: **merrier**, etc.

Words ending in -ior

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| warrior | junior | senior | exterior |
| inferior | superior | interior | |

GROUP 13

Verbs which double their final consonant before -ed

| | | | |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| drop | dropped | stop | stopped |
| travel | travelled | quarrel | quarrelled |
| compel | compelled | level | levelled |
| plan | planned | occur | occurred |
| trim | trimmed | slip | slipped |
| omit | omitted | wet | wetted |
| submit | submitted | worship | worshipped |

Verbs which do not double their final consonant before -ed

| | | | |
|----------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| visit | visited | limit | limited |
| conceal | concealed | profit | profited |
| benefit | benefited | digest | digested |
| content | contented | repeat | repeated |
| succeed | succeeded | treat | treated |

GROUP 14

Words which double their final consonant before -ing

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| get | getting | sit | sitting |
| run | running | dig | digging |
| cut | cutting | dip | dipping |
| drop | dropping | begin | beginning |
| shut | shutting | swim | swimming |
| occur | occurring | plan | planning |
| quarrel | quarrelling | fit | fitting |
| trim | trimming | forget | forgetting |
| throb | throbbing | compel | compelling |
| flog | flogging | bid | bidding |

Words which do not double their final consonant before -ing

| | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| eat | eating | find | finding |
| sing | singing | sign | signing |
| visit | visiting | limit | limiting |
| shoot | shooting | cool | cooling |
| meet | meeting | beat | beating |
| scream | screaming | lean | leaning |
| cheat | cheating | tread | treading |
| ponder | pondering | profit | profiting |
| seal | sealing | droop | drooping |

GROUP 15

Words with -a-

| | | |
|------|--------|------|
| bard | hard | bark |
| fast | last | bask |
| walk | warmth | gall |
| malt | salt | bald |

Words with -au-

| | | |
|--------|--------|---------|
| cause | fraud | caught |
| taught | pause | applaud |
| August | autumn | laundry |
| fault | haunt | maul |

Words with -aw

| | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| lawn | straw | crawl |
| fawn | flaw | brawl |
| pawn | claw | draw |

GROUP 16

Words ending in -o

| | | | |
|--------|----------|-------|-------|
| also | hero | echo | cargo |
| piano | tobacco | motto | photo |
| potato | mosquito | halo | hallo |

Exception: cocoa

Words ending in -ow

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| morrow | sorrow | borrow | sparrow |
| yellow | mellow | fellow | arrow |
| allow | swallow | below | wallow |
| envelop (verb) | | elope | develop |
| envelope (noun) | | | |

GROUP 17

Words ending in -ary

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| salary | library | January |
| necessary | contrary | secretary |
| primary | secondary | ordinary |
| temporary | stationary | boundary |
| dictionary | customary | proprietary |
| granary | sanitary | February |
| literary | seminary | solitary |

Words ending in -ery

| | | |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| bravery | battery | gallery |
| nursery | flattery | scenery |
| livery | delivery | recovery |
| silvery | mystery | machinery |
| discovery | forgery | stationery |
| watery | lottery | prudery |
| fishery | pottery | greenery |

Words ending in -ory

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| memory | factory | victory |
| laboratory | exclamatory | satisfactory |
| dormitory | territory | statutory |
| cursory | lavatory | migratory |
| transitory | accessory | oratory |
| promontory | reformatory | allegory |

Note: injury armoury

GROUP 18

Words ending in -city

city
velocity
paucity
elasticity
rusticity

felicity
atrocitv
rapacity
tenacity
scarcity

ferocity
publicity
sagacity
plasticity
duplicity

Words ending in -sity

curiosity
adversity
animosity
intensity

university
perversity
diversity

necessity
falsity
density

GROUP 19

Words ending in -ance

dance
balance
appearance
substance
instance
utterance
maintenance
acquaintance
clearance
hindrance
countenance

glance
prance
entrance
assistance
attendance
elegance
romance
finance
nuisance
vengeance
extravagance

distance
guidance
admittance
resistance
ignorance
radiance
importance
grievance
significance
inheritance
stance

Words ending in -ence

hence
confidence
fence
defence
offence
patience
licence
audience
consequence
insolence
silence
intelligence

absence
residence
innocence
evidence
difference
commence
science
obedience
reference
whence
reverence

presence
influence
correspondence
deference
sentence
penitence
dependence
competence
indolence
magnificence
negligence

Words ending in -ense

| | | |
|------------|----------|----------|
| dense | sense | tense |
| expense | license | nonsense |
| recompense | intense | incense |
| dispense | suspense | condense |

GROUP 20

Words ending in -ar

| | | |
|----------|---------|----------|
| sugar | pillar | tartar |
| cedar | polar | vicar |
| mortar | nectar | dollar |
| lunar | beggar | calendar |
| regular | scholar | peculiar |
| grammar | similar | friar |
| singular | vinegar | collar |

Words ending in -er

| | | |
|----------|------------|-----------|
| eager | water | dagger |
| hammer | charter | character |
| customer | carpenter | conquer |
| employer | feather | gather |
| juggler | ledger | leather |
| matter | mourner | stammer |
| lecturer | jeweller | lawyer |
| murder | astronomer | prompter |
| neuter | pitcher | defender |
| render | temper | stationer |

Words ending in -or

| | | |
|------------|------------|-----------|
| actor | author | bachelor |
| arbitrator | censor | corridor |
| debtor | error | equator |
| horror | janitor | languor |
| liquor | legislator | motor |
| mayor | monitor | narrator |
| pallor | protector | professor |
| spectator | suitor | stupor |
| tailor | traitor | tremor |
| translator | donor | sailor |

Words ending in -our

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| colour | labour | rumour |
| ardour | amour | clamour |
| harbour | parlour | odour |
| vapour | splendour | succour |
| honour | humour | endeavour |
| demeanour | valour | armour |

Words ending in -re

| | | |
|-----------|----------|---------|
| centre | acre | fibre |
| lustre | meagre | metre |
| spectre | lucre | theatre |
| sepulchre | massacre | litre |

Words ending in -ur

| | | |
|-------|--------|--------|
| fur | occur | recur |
| cur | concur | murmur |
| augur | demur | |

GROUP 21

Words ending in -tial

| | | |
|------------|--------------|-------------|
| martial | partial | essential |
| palatial | influential | substantial |
| credential | confidential | |
| torrential | reverential | |

Words ending in -cial

| | | |
|------------|------------|-------------|
| official | special | facial |
| racial | commercial | superficial |
| provincial | artificial | |

GROUP 22

Words ending in -ial

| | | |
|---------|-----------|------------|
| joyial | filial | genial |
| aerial | cordial | pictorial |
| trivial | perennial | serial |
| menial | imperial | industrial |
| dial | denial | burial |

Words ending in -eal

ideal
funereal

ordeal
ethereal

unreal
cereal

GROUP 23

Words ending in -cal

practical
medical
focal
radical

identical
vertical
vocal
economical

nautical
chemical
whimsical
lyrical

Words ending in -cle

cycle
particle

article
obstacle

icicle
spectacle

GROUP 24

*Words with -au-, -ua-, -er- and -ea- giving the same sound
as a in bark*

-au-

laugh

aunt

draught

-ua-

• **guard**

guardian

-er-

clerk

sergeant

Berkshire

-ea-

heart

hearth

GROUP 25

Words with -ie-

| | | |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| belief | believe | achieve |
| relief | relieve | niece |
| siege | besiege | shield |
| grieve | field | grief |
| yield | mien | fiend |
| wield | piece | retrieve |

*Note: friend**Words with -ei-*

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| receive | receipt | deceive |
| seize | conceive | conceit |
| weird | surfeit | deceit |
| ceiling | | |

Note: either and neither

GROUP 26

Words ending in -ceed

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| proceed | succeed | exceed |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|

Words ending in -cede

| | | |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| precede | recede | concede |
| accede | secede | |

GROUP 27

Words ending in -eat

| | | |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| repeat | defeat | bleat |
| cheat | seat | neat |
| beat | treat | entreat |
| retreat | feat | eat |
| meat | heat | wheat |

Words ending in -ete

compete
concrete
effete

delete
complete
deplete

athlete
replete
secrete

Words ending in -eet

meet
street

greet
sleet

sheet
feet

GROUP 28

r with different vowels giving the same sound

girl
dirge
mirth

bird
shirt
birth

first
birch
thirst

girth
skirt
dirty

hurt
church
burst

burn
turtle
curse

turn
lurch
curl

urge
hurdle
purse

earth
pearl

search

learn

dearth

worth
worse

word
worm

world

work

merge
terse

perch
disperse

err
herd

berth
immerse

GROUP 29

Words ending in -y

story
bury
matrimony

lorry
fury
sticky

cosy
folly
belly

country
hobby
rally

Words ending in -ey

| | | | |
|--------|---------|--------|--------|
| storey | honey | money | turkey |
| jockey | hackney | key | volley |
| monkey | donkey | valley | |

GROUP 30

Words ending in -tion

| | | |
|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| ambition | action | mention |
| definition | sanction | distinction |
| section | operation | reception |
| narration | intention | fraction |
| association | faction | protection |
| attention | station | objection |

Words ending in -sion

| | | |
|------------|------------|-----------|
| mansion | compulsion | admission |
| session | pretension | tension |
| discussion | possession | confusion |
| excursion | pension | |
| dimension | oppression | |

GROUP 31

Words ending in -ent

| | | |
|------------|-------------|------------|
| present | absent | innocent |
| resident | different | evident |
| penitent | obedient | competent |
| confident | silent | indolent |
| insolent | consequent | discontent |
| solvent | continent | permanent |
| represent | magnificent | vehement |
| ancient | patient | sufficient |
| reticent | eminent | imminent |
| efficient | negligent | deficient |
| merriment | recipient | prominent |
| talent | sentiment | patent |
| parent | torment | apparent |
| convenient | lament | violent |
| accident | president | descent |

Words ending in -ant

| | | |
|------------|-------------|-------------|
| elephant | giant | dominant |
| important | arrogant | inhabitant |
| fragrant | tenant | dormant |
| claimant | remnant | exorbitant |
| servant | confidant | instant |
| assistant | significant | lieutenant |
| attendant | tyrant | extravagant |
| elegant | informant | applicant |
| brilliant | ascendant | pleasant |
| descendant | reluctant | stagnant |
| radiant | relevant | |

GROUP 32

Words ending in -able

| | | |
|------------|-------------|------------|
| able | capable | liable |
| probable | agreeable | desirable |
| enviable | suitable | profitable |
| tolerable | navigable | pitiable |
| credible | favourable | sociable |
| lamentable | reliable | movable |
| irritable | curable | inevitable |
| separable | irreparable | |

Words ending in -ible

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| visible | possible | sensible |
| audible | edible | forcible |
| intelligible | fallible | digestible |
| plausible | destructible | permissible |
| legible | eligible | terrible |
| convertible | resistible | tangible |

GROUP 33

Words ending in -al

| | | |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| final | trial | phial |
| bridal | principal | recital |
| oval | postal | withdrawal |

| | | |
|---------|---------|--------------|
| renewal | coastal | annal |
| jackal | canal | moral |
| coral | animal | natal |
| penal | petal | social |
| journal | rural | oral |
| central | vocal | focal |
| normal | portal | mathematical |
| signal | regal | royal |
| loyal | dial | manual |
| vital | mental | naval |

Words ending in -el

| | | |
|---------|--------|---------|
| hotel | camel | channel |
| level | novel | travel |
| marvel | vowel | revel |
| tunnel | funnel | flannel |
| apparel | gravel | barrel |
| model | jewel | rebel |

Words ending in -le

| | | |
|---------|-----------|---------|
| idle | table | cable |
| fable | bottle | double |
| little | dabble | rabble |
| trouble | bubble | treble |
| rattle | principle | cripple |
| shuttle | knuckle | tickle |
| mingle | single | dangle |
| angle | triangle | mantle |
| handle | ankle | bangle |

GROUP 34

Words ending in -ck

| | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| sick | trick | rock | shock |
| peck | clock | brick | block |
| track | pick | thick | frock |
| nick | lick | tick | slack |
| kick | knack | smack | hack |

Words ending in -c

| | | |
|--------|------------|----------|
| Arctic | comic | traffic |
| civic | mimic | poetic |
| tragic | tropic | dramatic |
| basic | magic | lunatic |
| epic | arithmetic | picnic |
| colic | lyric | tunic |

GROUP 35

Words ending in -eam, -eem and -eme all giving the same sound

-eam

| | | |
|------------------|--------|-------|
| beam | gleam | seam |
| team | ream | dream |
| steam | scream | |
| cream | | |

-eem

| | | |
|--------|--------|------|
| teem | seem | deem |
| redeem | esteem | |

-eme

| | | |
|---------|-------|--------|
| supreme | theme | scheme |
| extreme | | |

GROUP 36

The sound z in -se and -ze

-se

| | | | |
|---------|----------|-----------|----------|
| demise | rise | advertise | ease |
| please | advise | excise | cheese |
| praise | phrase | tease | pose |
| nose | prose | likewise | surmise |
| apprise | surprise | revise | exercise |

-ze

| | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| prize | breeze | organize | size |
| craze | graze | freeze | maize |
| minimize | terrorize | hypnotize | realize |

GROUP 37

Words ending in -ay

| | | |
|---------|--------|----------|
| play | betray | sway |
| defray | clay | waylay |
| portray | Norway | mainstay |
| delay | tray | slay |
| essay | quay | pay |

Words ending in -ey

| | | |
|---------|--------|-------|
| prey | grey | abbey |
| convey | survey | they |
| disobey | whew | |

Words ending in -eigh

| | | |
|-------|-------|---------|
| neigh | weigh | inveigh |
|-------|-------|---------|

GROUP 38

Words ending in -ious

| | | |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| serious | curious | furious |
| religious | tedious | notorious |
| glorious | melodious | industrious |
| odious | pious | injurious |
| malicious | luxurious | victorious |
| previous | illustrious | obnoxious |

Words ending in -eous

| | | |
|------------|-------------|---------------|
| courteous | hideous | erroneous |
| plenteous | spontaneous | instantaneous |
| gorgeous | courageous | advantageous |
| outrageous | | |

GROUP 39

Words ending in -age

| | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| bandage | savage | bondage |
| passage | message | homage |
| ravage | adage | damage |
| usage | manage | village |
| tillage | courage | average |

Note: marriage, carriage

Words ending in -ege

| | | |
|---------|-----------|--------|
| college | privilege | allege |
|---------|-----------|--------|

Words ending in -edge

| | | |
|-------------|--------|--------|
| knowledge | fledge | dredge |
| acknowledge | | |

Words ending in -idge

| | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| bridge | ridge | cartridge |
| partridge | porridge ⁷ | |

GROUP 40

Words ending in -ue

| | | |
|--------|--------|--------|
| virtue | true | blue |
| hue | rescue | pursue |
| clue | sue | issue |

Words ending in -ew

| | | |
|------|------|------|
| dew | crew | blew |
| slew | chew | grew |
| Jew | new | stew |

Note: view and interview

GROUP 41

Words ending in -ety

| | | |
|-----------|---------|---------|
| society | anxiety | variety |
| safety | piety | rickety |
| propriety | nicety | fidgety |
| entirety | satiety | |

Words ending in -ity

| | | |
|---------|-------------|----------|
| ability | reality | charity |
| levity | gravity | purity |
| utility | opportunity | timidity |
| verity | severity | hilarity |

GROUP 42

Words ending in -cious

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| malicious | suspicious | delicious |
| atrocious | gracious | ferocious |
| auspicious | precious | capricious |
| sagacious | conscious | judicious |

Words ending in -tious

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| ambitious | seditionous | conscientious |
| pretentious | propitious | fictitious |
| infectious | facetious | |

GROUP 43

Words ending in -ome

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| income | welcome | dome |
| troublesome | tiresome | handsome |

Words ending in -om

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| blossom | freedom | venom |
| idiom | accustom | custom |
| kingdom | seldom | ransom |
| axiom | random | |

Words ending in -um

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| album | medium | decorum |
| chum | odium | radium |
| vacuum | premium | tedium |
| forum | emporium | minimum |
| maximum | | |

APPENDIX III

*Words with silent letters**Silent b*

| | | |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| doubt | doubted | doubtful |
| undoubted | undoubtedly | redoubtable |
| debt | debtor | indebted |
| comb | tomb | entombed |
| subtle | subtlety | benumbed |

Silent c

scene
sceptre
crescent
science
aquiesce

victuals
scent
muscle
omniscience
abscess

descendant
scissors
'scimitar

Silent d

Wednesday
ridge
grudge

knowledge
judge
lodge

bridge
trudge
acknowledge

Silent g

sign
foreign
sovereign
reign

design
assign
campaign
malign

resign
consign
deign
champagne

Silent h

heir
shepherd

honest
honour

Silent ch

yacht

Silent gh

right
tight
plight
bought
eight
haughty
through
borough
freight

might
sight
flight
sought
taught
daughter
thorough
naughty
weight

light
fight
bright
brought
caught
neighbour
slaughter
straight
height

Silent k

knife
knowledge

knight
knave

kneel
know

Silent l

calf
balm
palm

half
calm
halve

almond
psalm
alms

Silent n

autumn
hymn

solemn
column

condemn

Silent p

psalm
psychology
cupboard

corps
pneumonia
psalmist

receipt
pseudonym
psalter

Silent s

island
islet

aisle
viscount

isle
puisne

Silent t

listen
Christmas
rustle
nestle
itching
watch
clutch
hitch

hasten
moisten
whistle
wretched
mistletoe
batch
hatchet
witch

fasten
bustle
wrestle
etching
apostle
crutch
catch
often

Silent u

biscuit
guard
guess
guitar
guild

buy
guise
beguile
guinea

building
disguise
guide
guarantee

Silent ue

league
colleague
dialogue
pedagogue

fatigue
intrigue
catalogue
plague

tongue
vague
demagogue

Silent w

whole
answer
wrangle
wrong

wry
wrestle
wholesome
wrist

write
wretched
whooping-cough

APPENDIX IV

Words often confused

| | | | |
|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| ale | bale | male | made |
| ail | bail | mail | maid |
| hale | pale | sale | tale |
| hail | pail | sail | tail |
| vale | quiet | mane | pane |
| veil | quite | main | pain |
| wail | | | |
| plane | gate | find | vine |
| plain | gait | fined | wine |
| | | | whine |
| seen | alter | wait | way |
| scene | altar | weight | weigh |
| lessen | sees | hire | whole |
| lesson | seas | higher | hole |
| | seize | | |
| | cease | | |
| right | sent | coarse | blue |
| write | scent | course | blew |
| flee | dual | would | sole |
| flea | duel | wood | soul |
| waist | pray | two | were |
| waste | prey | too | wear |
| | | to | where |

| | | | |
|---------|--------|-----------|---------|
| wont | suit | aught | seam |
| want | soot | ought | seem |
| fain | lain | son | rot |
| feign | lane | sun | wrought |
| parade | horde | buy | sore |
| prayed | hoard | bye | soar |
| | | by | |
| cellar | boar | mantle | leather |
| seller | bore | mantel | lather |
| picture | rap | liar | toll |
| pitcher | wrap | lyre | tall |
| loan | bow | jealous | sealing |
| lone | bough | zealous | ceiling |
| dear | manner | beer | panel |
| deer | manor | bear | penal |
| | | bier | |
| hear | medal | peer | fair |
| here | meddle | pear | fare |
| cast | road | climb | rear |
| caste | rode | clime | rare |
| root | shear | furs | seer |
| route | sheer | firs | sere |
| | | furze | |
| martial | gauze | flour | story |
| marshal | gauge | flower | storey |
| with | hew | imperial | weather |
| whither | hue | imperious | whether |
| | | | |
| prophet | nay | allowed | accept |
| profit | neigh | aloud | except |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| cell sell | access excess | holy wholly | allude elude |
| mettle metal | rain reign rein | birth berth | pour pore |
| canvas canvass | affect effect | casual causal | adopt adapt |
| their there | allusion illusion | compliment complement | principal principle |
| defer differ | loose lose | check cheque | proceed precede |
| cite sight site | advise advice | creditable credible | stationary stationery |
| dying dyeing | latter letter later | dessert desert | wreath wreathe |
| eruption irruption | vacation vocation | knotty naughty | decent descent |
| need knead | assent ascent | team teem | disease decease |
| weak week | idle idol | cord chord | bridle bridal |
| core corps | receipt recede | accede exceed | continual continuous |
| apposite opposite | physique physic | assay essay | ingenuous ingenious |
| addition edition | voracious veracious | confident confidant | slight sleight |
| envelop envelope | cession session | concert consort | eminent imminent |
| emerge immerge | council counsel | deference difference | corporal corporeal |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| councillor counsellor | eligible illegible | emigrant immigrant | deprecate depreciate |
| elicit illicit | divers diverse | judicial judicious | precedent president |
| proposition preposition | prophecy prophecy | facility felicity | succeed secede |

APPENDIX V

Groups of words similar in spelling

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| polish cherish banish foolish | abolish relish Danish bookish | demolish perish Spanish boorish |
| abuse amuse diffuse attribute acute | accuse fuse confuse repute salute | abuse profuse refuse mute confute |
| threw flew | chew crew | grew knew |
| power flower vowel | tower bower trowel | shower towel bowel |
| little ripple | middle higgle | riddle giggle |

wicket
picket
pack
sack
hockey

cricket
wicked
lack
rack
jockey

ticket
rickets
track
slack
mockery

lovely
bravely
nicely

lately
severely
savagely

lonely
merely
solely

really
totally
frugally

cruelly
wholly

brutally
continually

luckily
merrily

funnily
happily

hastily
easily

humbly
idly

duly
simply

truly
wily

journal

journey

journalist

hour

hourly

sour

eight
weight
neighbour

eighty
weighty
sleigh

weigh
neigh
height

acquire
acquaintance

acquaint

acquit

rattle
saddle

battle
paddle

cattle
waddle

annual
usual

manual
continual

gradual
mutual

soil
spoil
coil

avoid
noise
foil

moist
toil
voile

dial

trial

phial

lemon

melon

demon

sermon

eleven

seven

heaven

curtain

certain

empire
require
aspire

umpire
acquire
perspire

admire
inquire
respire

parrot

carrot

gallop

friend

ancient

December

November

remember

ready
steady

readily
steadily

instead
thread

behead
spread

tread
dread

drown
crown
frown

drowned
crowned
frowned

drowning
crowning
frowning

100 THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH SPELLING

weary
dreary

weariness
dreariness

wearily
drearily

hurry

hurried

hurriedly

bleed
speed
feed
wed
bed

bled
sped
fed
wedding
bedding

weed
need
seed
wedded

vague
gradual

plague
graduate

ague
gradient

stage
discourage

wage
savage

average
drainage

picture

lecture

fracture

fraction
afflict

faction
conflict

fiction
inflict

section

election

selection

comb
ample
trample
condemn
dumb

tomb
sample

autumn
thumb

womb
example

solemn
climb

account
accomplish
accusation
accept
accident

according
accurate

access
acceptance

accompany
accuse

accent

marry
carry
venture
college

obedient
lenient
experience

sufficient

religion
curious
serious

married
carried
venturesome
allege

obedience
convenient
expedient

efficient

religious
previous
victorious

marriage
carriage
adventure

lenience
convenience

ancient

anxious
industrious
glorious

APPENDIX VI

List A

abuse
acute
alas
almost
always
answer
arrive
awe
banana
boundary
bare
bathe
beak
beard
becoming
begged
Bible
biting
boiled
bottom
breath

across
agree
alight
alter
angel
appear
attack
backer
believe
breadth
bargain
bath
beam
beast
bedding
beggar
bigger
bitter
bosom
bough
breathe

actor
airy
allow
although
anna
around
avoid
bale
bicycle
banner
baron
battle
bear
beautiful
begging
belly
birth
blue
bottle
brake
bridegroom

| | | |
|------------|-------------|-----------|
| bridge | brief | brilliant |
| brutal | bucket | buffalo |
| bugle | bunch | bundle |
| business | button | canal |
| capacity | captain | carriage |
| carried | carrying | castle |
| cattle | caught | celebrate |
| cellar | centre | channel |
| character | chariot | cheap |
| check | cheerfully | cheese |
| chew | chicken | chief |
| children | choice | choose |
| chorus | Christian | Christmas |
| circle | circular | circus |
| clerk | coffin | collar |
| college | coming | common |
| companion | comparative | compel |
| compelled | compete | connect |
| conquer | continent | control |
| controlled | coolie | cough |
| cousin | cream | create |
| cricket | cunning | curious |
| cycle | daily | dangerous |
| daughter | dazzle | deceive |
| degree | defeat | desert |
| dew | diary | digging |
| dimmer | dirty | disease |
| discovery | dipped | ditch |
| division | dryness | eager |
| earth | easily | eight |
| either | empire | emptiness |
| enemy | envoy | envious |
| essay | envy | excellent |
| except | extreme | farewell |
| feather | feminine | fifth |
| finger | forty | fought |
| friend | fruit | fulfil |
| gardener | gentle | gently |
| giant | goal | grammar |
| grey | grief | guest |
| guilty | hammer | handle |

happily
heavy
heroine
honour
idle
interest
jewel
knowledge
lantern
lazily
lessen
likely
lonely
lovely
manual
meadow
minor
mosque
narrow
neigh
neuter
noise
oily
ought
palace
patriot
peon
plane
possess
previous
proper
purse
raise
ready
receive
relief
rival
rupee
salary
science
senior

heart
height
hockey
honey
imagine
jackal
judge
kneel
laughter
leather
lesson
lion
loose
maiden
marble
medal
mischief
muddy
natural
neighbour
ninety
obvious
opponent
owner
parcel
peace
piece
plain
pour
prey
pulse
quarrel
ratio
receive
reign
repeat
rough
saddle
scene
search
sense

heaven
heroes
homely
horror
injury
jealous
kitchen
ladder
lawn
length
library
little
lose
malaria
mathematics
merrily
misery
narrate
naughty
neither
ninth
ocean
oral
paid
pastime
penny
pillar
poison
preach
principal
purple
quiet
razor
receipt
rein
riddle
rubber
safety
scent
seize
separate

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| settle | siege | sneeze |
| snore | soldier | solemn |
| sparrow | special | square |
| stammer | stir | stomach |
| storey | straight | strength |
| succeed | suffer | sugar |
| suit | supper | surround |
| survey | tailor | tangent |
| terrible | terror | thief |
| thirtieth | tidy | tigress |
| title | toilet | tongue |
| total | tour | traveller |
| truly | Tuesday | tutor |
| turkey | twelfth | two |
| umbrella | umpire | until |
| usual | utter | vacant |
| vacation | vague | valley |
| various | vegetable | vehicle |
| veil | vein | vessel |
| view | village | visitor |
| voice | vowel | waist |
| weapon | weather | wedding |
| welcome | wheat | wooden |
| world | worry | wrath |
| wrist | written | yield |

List B

| | | |
|------------|------------|------------|
| admirable | agreeable | algebra |
| already | altogether | ambition |
| analysis | ancestor | annual |
| appeal | apposition | argue |
| arithmetic | arrival | article |
| assist | author | average |
| awful | bachelor | balance |
| beginning | belief | benefit |
| betrothal | blossom | bravery |
| bridle | bulky | bullet |
| burial | butcher | camera |
| cancelled | canvas | career |
| caution | cease | central |
| ceremony | certainty | changeable |

chemical
chimney
cigarette
cleanliness
collide
commerce
community
conceit
confer
continuous
councillor
creature
curiosity
dainty
decision
delicious
descend
develop
digestion
district
durable
easiness
editor
entrance
equip
exceed
failure
fatal
feeble
frequent
gallant
generous
George
governor
guide
heartly
hue
illness
immediate
industrial
intelligent

cherish
chivalry
civility
coarse
column
commercial
competition
conceive
conferred
conveyance
courteous
criminal
cushion
dairy
defiance
dense
desirable
devour
dignity
dreary
dutiful
eclipse
effort
envelop
error
expense
familiar
fault
festival
funeral
gallop
genius
goddess
gracious
haughty
heir
huge
imaginary
impatient
industrious
interval

chilly
chronicle
claimant
colony
comma
committee
compliment
concrete
considerable
corpse
cram
cupboard
customer
decent
definite
dental
desirous
diet
diligent
duly
earthen
edition
emperor
envelope
essential
extravagant
fashion
February
flour
furious
gaol
geometry
gossip
guess
heal
hotel
idol
imitate
imperial
injurious
invasion

| | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| irregular | issue | ivory |
| jealousy | journal | journey |
| juggler | juice | junior |
| kettle | knead | labour |
| later | latter | lawyer |
| lenient | lightning | liquid |
| livelihood | loosened | luggage |
| lunar | machine | magazine |
| magician | malady | mansion |
| marriage | martial | marvellous |
| meant | medicine | melancholy |
| military | mineral | mischievous |
| moisture | monster | mosquito |
| mountainous | moustaches | mutiny |
| mutual | navy | necessary |
| nervous | nourish | nowadays |
| nursery | oasis | obedience |
| occasion | occurred | odour |
| offered | official | onion |
| opinion | opium | optional |
| oxygen | palate | parade |
| parallel | partial | partner |
| passion | pebble | peculiar |
| peevish | pension | perceive |
| persevere | pierce | pigeon |
| piety | pious | pitcher |
| plague | pleasant | precious |
| predecessor | preparation | pressure |
| principle | prudent | purify |
| purpose | pursue | pygmy |
| quarrelled | quench | rattle |
| readiness | rebellion | recommend |
| recovery | recruit | referee |
| region | religion | remedy |
| renown | reproach | rescue |
| riot | rogue | rosy |
| ruin | rumour | Russia |
| sacred | satisfactory | scanty |
| scenery | scientific | scheme |
| secrecy | sentinel | session |
| several | severe | shallow |

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| shield | silvery | sincere |
| sketch | skilful | slaughter |
| social | sour | sovereign |
| speech | sphere | sponge |
| spur | statue | steady |
| submit | succession | summon |
| support | supreme | surgeon |
| suspicion | sweat | syrup |
| tedious | telegram | tenant |
| theatre | theme | theory |
| tobacco | tomorrow | tournament |
| traitor | treasury | triumph |
| tuition | twilight | tyrant |
| unanimous | union | utility |
| valuable | vapour | verify |
| viceroy | violent | violin |
| virgin | virtuous | vision |
| volume | weight | welfare |
| whether | whistle | wholly |
| witch | woollen | wreck |

List C

| | | |
|--------------|----------------|-----------|
| abbey | acknowledge | acquit |
| aghast | allege | allowance |
| ally | almond | ancient |
| anguish | anxiety | appetite |
| applaud | approach | armour |
| ascend | assembly | athletic |
| attendance | autumn | axiom |
| badge | baggage | ballad |
| ballot | bankrupt | banquet |
| barrier | bedew | behaviour |
| beneficial | besiege | bidding |
| biography | biscuit | bluish |
| boycott | breach | bridal |
| bustle | calamity | calendar |
| campaign | cashier | casual |
| catalogue | challenge | champion |
| chaos | characteristic | cheque |
| cholera | Christianity | circuit |
| civilization | clergy | clutch |

| | | |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| cobbler | dollision | combat |
| comedy | communication | compulsion |
| compulsory | confident | congenial |
| conscience | contagious | convenient |
| corporal | corridor | counsel |
| counsellor | countenance | courtesy |
| credible | critical | culture |
| current | dacoity | decease |
| deference | deficiency | departure |
| despair | despise | destiny |
| disaster | disciple | discipline |
| dismiss | dowry | draught |
| earthquake | eclipse | ecstasy |
| efficient | elegy | eligible |
| embroider | eminent | enthusiasm |
| errand | etiquette | excel |
| excelled | exhibition | expedition |
| expel | experience | expert |
| explanation | explosion | facial |
| facility | fatigue | favourable |
| fierce | flannel | flatter |
| flavour | fluid | foreign |
| forgery | fragrant | fraud |
| gaiety | gallery | genuine |
| gesture | glorify | grandeur |
| greasy | grudge | guarantee |
| guardian | gymnastic | hackney |
| hazard | hereditary | hoarse |
| honorary | humorous | hypocrite |
| illegible | illiterate | illumine |
| imminent | immovable | independent |
| indignant | infectious | infinite |
| influence | institution | interfere |
| interview | intrigue | judgement |
| kidnap | league | legend |
| legible | leisure | liberty |
| lieutenant | literature | lottery |
| lustre | luxurious | malice |
| manufacture | massacre | maternal |
| meagre | melodious | memoir |
| minimum | monument | motto |

mould
 muscle
 necessity
 notorious
 occupation
 omission
 origin
 paraphrase
 partition
 penalty
 pilot
 ponderous
 privilege
 prophecy
 proprietor
 punctual
 recompense
 repetition
 ridiculous
 rustle
 scandal
 secretary
 series
 slavish
 splendour
 stagger
 staunch
 studious
 suicide
 theorem
 tragedy
 trivial
 tyranny
 urban
 variety
 versatile
 villain
 wilful

mourning
 muscular
 nobility
 novelty
 octroi
 operation
 original
 particle
 pathetic
 penance
 pitiable
 possession
 procession
 prophesy
 provision
 pursuit
 refuge
 resistance
 routine
 sanguine
 scarcity
 senate
 shrewd
 slight
 squeeze
 stationary
 structure
 sublime
 sympathy
 torture
 trespass
 tunnel
 unique
 utterance
 vengeance
 vicious
 volley
 witness

municipal
 mystery
 notable
 numerous
 offspring
 opportunity
 palatial
 particular
 peculiarity
 physique
 pompous
 prefer
 programme
 prophet
 psalm
 reality
 rehearsal
 review
 ruffian
 sanitary
 scissors
 sergeant
 skeleton
 sociable
 squirrel
 stationery
 stubborn
 sufficient
 temporary
 tradition
 triumphant
 typhoid
 university
 variable
 verdure
 vigour
 wastage
 wretched





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